

COMMIT THESE THINGS TO FAITHFUL MEN:
EQUIPPING PASTORS FOR SMALL CHURCH MINISTRY

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE TEMPLE BAPTIST SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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APPLEGATE, MICHIGAN

APRIL 15, 2013

Approval
by
The Doctor of Ministry Project Committee
of
Temple Baptist Seminary

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Focus/Emphasis: Pastoral Leadership

Project Report Title:

COMMIT THESE THINGS TO FAITHFUL MEN:
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this project is to develop a workshop for the local church designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. Young people begin their ministry careers knowing little about the small church, yet the majority of pastors and church leaders will begin in the small church. A proper understanding of church culture and identification of customs will facilitate success within the small church. The researcher collected and compared information from small church pastors in Sanilac County and identified consensus literature. The study of sources revealed the importance of building relationships, being patient, and loving people through faithfulness to God, family, and the church. These are the building blocks for the product of this project, which is a workshop for teaching how to understand culture by building relationships; how to identify small church customs while exercising patience; and how to demonstrate love to God's people by adapting to the current culture and customs of the community and the small church. Finally, remaining faithful to God in all areas of life is success for the small church pastor/leader. Small church pastors who evaluated the workshop, found it appropriate, understandable, and profitable for the small church in Michigan's Sanilac County. Moreover, the primary premise that additional pastoral education at the local level was needed, and that the design of the workshop was appropriate for small church pastor/leaders, and its implementation, was affirmed.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my Sharlene, Daniel Tiffany and James,

For your sacrifice

And

To Mom for your seamlessly
endless editing and encouragement

I am eternally grateful

I love you all!

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After this researcher sent out hundreds of résumés, a congregation of a small church in rural Michigan called him as their pastor. He had served many churches in positions such as janitor, sound and audio technician, Sunday School teacher, deacon, youth and assistant pastor. However, this was the big time, senior pastor. The researcher felt equipped for the task and would start in the weeks following his graduation from seminary.

However, one family disaster after another, leadership conflicts and malicious church politics made the next six months seem like the researcher felt as if he were in an alternate reality. This new situation became the most challenging time of this researcher's life. Parsing Greek for his Sunday morning sermon was a welcomed break considering the alternative, dealing with the church's problems.

Growing up in a large church, attending seminary and learning about large church functionality and programming, the idea of a family patriarch running the church was foreign to this researcher. He soon found that it was common for a patriarch to lead the small church instead of the pastor. It was difficult for this researcher to learn that he was not in charge. Furthermore, the congregation did not accept this researcher, as new pastors are outsiders and it takes years for an outsider to earn the trust of the congregation. The belief that seminary had equipped him for ministry faded along with

his plans of church growth and visions of success. This researcher began to realize that he needed to discover special attributes of the small church in order to lead effectively, as his experience proved a lack of training in this area.

Background of the Study

In 2007, Richard J. Krejcir released the results of a seventeen-year study by The Schaeffer Institute reporting 75% of pastors surveyed felt unqualified and/or poorly trained by seminaries to lead the church. In the same report, Barna, Focus on the Family and Fuller Seminary reported similar findings.¹ A common response to this study may be to wonder about the seminary's practices and the quality of their curriculum for equipping pastors. However the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2 and Ephesians 4:11-12 clearly lays the responsibility of pastoral training on the shoulders of church leaders.²

During a panel discussion of the Gospel Coalition, Albert Mohler, Jr. agreed with the Apostle Paul as he said, "We should be the places that help churches to train pastors."³ Mohler identified seminaries as a place for "The transfer of cognitive information," meaning that seminaries are institutions of intellectual rather than emotional cultivation. Moreover Peter in 1 Peter 5:1-4, calls pastors to "shepherd the flock" which is described by John MacArthur Jr. as one who is "wise, sensitive,

¹ R. J. Krejcir, *Statistics on Pastors* (n.p.: Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development, 2007), http://www.intotheword.org/articles_view.asp?articleid=36562 (accessed October 17, 2012).

² John M. Koessler, "The Dynamics of Small-Church Ministry," in *The Master's Perspective on Pastoral Ministry*, ed. Richard L. Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas, The Master's Perspective Series 2000, pt. 3 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 233.

³ *Training the Next Generation of Pastors and Other Christian Leaders* (n.p.: Gospel Coalition, 2011), http://thegospelcoalition.org/resources/a/training_the_next_generation_of_pastors_and_other_christian_leaders (accessed October 29, 2012).

protective, and self-giving,” of which all except wisdom are driven by emotion.⁴ Out of these four descriptors only one fourth of what describes a pastor is cognitive. Therefore, one should expect The Schaeffer Institute results. The question is then, where do pastors acquire the remaining three quarters of their training as shepherds? The answer is in the church, and the researcher endeavors to encourage its leaders toward an active role in training pastors by providing workshop materials that will be useful for teaching pastors how to discover the attributes within their small churches.

Small churches remain an important part of the body of Christ. A Hartford Institute study found fifty-nine percent of all churches average less than one-hundred attendees with a median attendance of seventy-five.⁵ Therefore, the majority of new pastors will begin fulltime ministry by serving in a small church. Many will encounter problems much like the researcher discussed in the introduction. Although the introduction does not give problem specifics, many pastors can relate to the great amount of difficulty experienced by the researcher as he entered his first church. Additional training provided by the local church can lead to greater success.

The small Michigan Baptist church this researcher served as pastor closed due to the problems discussed in the introduction. The closing forced the researcher to question his leadership and identify the causes of the church closure. Somewhere in the midst of sorting through emotions, experiences, and academics, the researcher realized his improper view of 2 Timothy 2:2. This discovery stirred compassion and concern within

⁴John MacArthur, *The Master's Plan for the Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 194.

⁵ Hartford Institute for Religion Research, “What's the Average Size of U.S. Churches?,” in *Fast Facts* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary, 2010), hrr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html#sizecong (accessed September 19, 2012).

the researcher as he studied the small church. Facts and statistics of small church decline threatened this researcher's calling. Furthermore, church-growth books with programs designed to eliminate the small church in place of larger more contemporary worship services also threatened this researcher's calling. Therefore, this project grew out of a desire to train pastors for better service in the small church. The researcher hopes, through this ministry research project, to produce a workshop that identifies the attributes pastors might face in the small church of Michigan's Sanilac County. The intended design of this workshop is to place the responsibility of pastoral training on the local church.

The Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project is to develop a workshop for the local church designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. Through this workshop, the researcher will answer the question, "What training can the local church offer to better equip pastors for small church ministry in Michigan's Sanilac County?" The question is a response to the results of the study from the Schaeffer Institute, which details that the majority of pastors do not feel prepared for ministry and from the Apostle Paul who teaches that pastoral training is the responsibility of local church leadership. By producing a workshop designed for teaching pastors how to discover the particular attributes pastors might face in the small church, the researcher will be better equipping pastors for ministry and encouraging local church involvement in educating pastors of Michigan's Sanilac County.

The Context of the Problem

Some trace small churches to the upper room in John 20:19, 26⁶ while others believe the birth of the church was at Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. Regardless, small churches are an integral part of America's culture. Being a pastor in America had meaning and involved taking care of people both physically and spiritually. The pastor would make his rounds to all the families under his care, bringing God's blessings and praying for needs. He encouraged hope for the harvest and the health of children. At one time pastors were respected, revered, and even feared for their connection with God⁷.

James Killen remembers such an era:

I remember the day when the adventure began. One week after my ordination and two weeks before my wedding, I left the city that had been my home and drove north for most of a day. In late afternoon, I stopped in front of the little white church surrounded by big oak trees that would be the meeting place of the first congregation of which I was to be pastor, and the little white house built of salvaged lumber that would be my new home. I stepped out of the car into warm, pine-scented stillness. I could hear nothing but the sound of a gentle breeze and the call of a bobwhite. I looked around and realized that I was in a place that was very different and very beautiful.

Within minutes, an old pickup truck rattled to a stop in front of the house. A suntanned man in denim work clothes and a straw hat got out and rambled toward me with a bashful smile on his face. He explained that he was the chairman of the Administrative Board and my nearest neighbor. He had been watching for me. He showed me around, invited me to come to his house for supper, and told me that choir practice would be at "dark thirty." I was on my way to learning to be a pastor.⁸

⁶ Anthony G. Pappas, ed. *Inside the Small Church* (n.p.: Alban Institute, 2001), 1.

⁷ Philip E. Ayers, *What Ever Happened to Respect?* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2012), xvii.

⁸ James L. Killen Jr., *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), vii.

Times have changed. Instead of balancing the commands, “shepherd the flock” in 1 Peter 5:2 and “make disciples” in Matthew 28:19, today’s pastors tend toward the latter where “making disciples” means adding numbers to the role. Finding they lessen their emphasis on spiritual growth, which is consistent with “shepherding the flock,” in exchange for “making disciples” with progressive growth evangelism, pastors fail to realize they have adopted an unbalanced approach to traditional Christendom in the pursuit of larger congregational numbers. Nevertheless fifty percent of the churches today still average less than one hundred attendees and remain the religious home for sixty percent of America’s Protestants.⁹ Small town pastors with average congregations have the same Acts 6:4 job description, which is to pray and speak God’s Word. However, today’s pastors have a different outlook on ministry than the traditional approach of their predecessors. A new evangelism demonstrates today’s outlook on ministry, seminary, and the church.

An article by Tim Stafford, senior writer for Christianity Today, demonstrates the problem with a progressive approach to numerical growth; Stafford calls it “new evangelism.”¹⁰ Small established churches often have difficulty reaching their communities with the Gospel of Christ. Instead of working with these churches, pastors are redirecting efforts of revitalization toward modern style church planting. Proving these points, Stafford quotes George Hunter of Asbury Theological Seminary as he

⁹ Gary L. McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All* (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1999), 18; The Barna Group, *Small Churches Struggle to Grow Because of the People They Attract* (n.p.: Barna Group, Ltd, 2009., September 2, 2003), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/126-small-churches-struggle-to-grow-because-of-the-people-they-attract> (accessed September 21, 2012).

¹⁰ Tim Stafford, *Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples*, vol. 51, bk. 9 of *September* (n.p.: Christianity Today, 2007), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/september/36.68.html> (accessed September 21, 2012).

writes, “Churches after 15 years typically plateau. After 35 years, they typically can’t even replace those [members] they lose. New congregations reach a lot more pre-Christian people.”¹¹ The problem of numerical growth is not with a churches’ age, the problem is in the culture of the small church. Today’s pastors know how well modern programs work in larger churches. The result is a misunderstanding of the importance of historic small church culture. Especially according to Stafford, those established congregations that have focused internally as opposed to continuing the outward focus of its founders that led to initial growth.¹²

Much of Modern Christianity is program driven. Simply browsing the local Christian bookstore shelves will reveal books like *Church Marketing 101*, *Ignite: How to Spark Immediate Growth in Your Church*, *Comeback Churches*, and the still popular, *Purpose Driven Church*.¹³ It is easy to add to this list books like Rainer’s *Simple Church*, and *Essential Church* or even Hornsby’s book *The Attractional Church*. Many have suggestions for the small church.¹⁴

Authors have difficulties when discussing the small church. They like to suggest transformational change for the small church, which contrasts the large church’s linear change. For example, there are books with programs to make the big church bigger

¹¹ Stafford, *Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples*.

¹² Ibid., 1.

¹³ Richard L. Reising, *Church Marketing 101: Preparing Your Church for Greater Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006).; Nelson Searcy, *Ignite* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2009).; Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Come Back Churches* (Nashville: B&H, 2007).; Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

¹⁴ Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2006).; Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, *Essential Church?* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2008).; Billy Hornsby, *The Attractional Church: Growth Through a Refreshing Relational, and Relevant Church Experience* (n.p.: FaithWords, 2011).;

(linear) and books with programs to make the small church like the big church (transformational). One example is *Transforming Church in Rural America*, by Shannon O'Dell. In this model, O'Dell suggests taking small churches and transforming them into large network churches.¹⁵ This is a good example of misaligned focus.¹⁶

Pastor, church growth, revival conferences, and seminaries promote examples of such methods that work in today's society. Culture is increasingly hostile against religion, especially monotheism. Limiting society to one God is against the tolerant ways of modernism. Therefore, the church has searched methods and programs for ways to appeal to the public. Large churches with adequate resources share their findings so other churches can imitate their methods and implement their programs with duplication as the goal.

The problem however, lies in the fact that small churches do not realize the importance of sharing their success. They also lack the resources and the publicity to share success stories with other small churches. Therefore, the majority of published success comes from the large church sector. Churches read of the achievements of other large churches and repeat the process, manufacturing a religious fad that entices imitation. The demand for imitation births conferences and seminars, while persuading seminaries to teach the new methods that are now considered reliable. There is nothing wrong with this approach, except that these new methods designed in the large church often have less effectiveness in their smaller sister churches.¹⁷

¹⁵ Shannon O'Dell, *Transforming Church in Rural America* (Green Forest: New Leaf Press, 2010).

¹⁶ Killen., *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 3.

¹⁷ McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, 19.

Christian leaders desire to be effective. They will do what is necessary to grow their church or to improve the methods they already use without fully understanding their congregation. In efforts to save the small church, pastors employ the techniques learned at their last job, latest conference, or in seminary.¹⁸ Rather, they could employ methods and techniques learned from within the church in accordance with the commands from the Pastoral Epistles (Titus 2:1-15; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; 1 Tim. 4:6-11). The small church can reclaim their pastors by accepting the responsibility of pastoral training at the local church level. This training teaches pastors how to identify the church's cultural characteristics. This study is an effort to solve the identified problem encompassing the small church. A few definitions follow to understand the range of terms.

The Definition of Terms

For ease of understanding, the terms require defining according to the researcher's intentions. These definitions are merely to assist understanding and deter arguments by use of a general meaning.

Church: "A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. ...Each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors[/elders] and deacons." (Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3;

¹⁸ McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, 17.

14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28)¹⁹ For the purpose of this study, church sizes are to be defined by the following:

Small: The small church has 100 or fewer average weekend attendees.²⁰

Medium: The mid-size or medium size church has 301-999 attendees.²¹ For this study, medium and large churches are one category.

Large: The large church has 1000 or more attendees.²² For this study, medium and large churches are one category.

Customs: Customs are “long-established practices considered as unwritten law.”²³

Culture: Culture is “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization.”²⁴

Emerging church: “Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses the nine practices, Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as

¹⁹ Southern Baptist Convention, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (n.p.: SBC.net, 1009-2013), <http://www.sbc.net/BFM/bfm2000.asp#vi> (accessed April 4, 2013).

²⁰ The Barna Group, *Small Churches Struggle to Grow Because of the People They Attract*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*., Eleventh ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

²⁴ Ibid.

producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.”²⁵

Evangelism: William Schweer states, “While many think of evangelism as a NT phenomena, profound concern for all people is also obvious in the OT (1 Kings 8:41–45; Ps. 22:27–28; Isa. 2:2–4). God’s care for the first couple after they had sinned, His plan to “bless” all people through the Israelite nation, and His continuing attempts through the prophets and through discipline to forge His people into a usable nation all speak of His concern.”²⁶ Luke 4:43 and Acts 8:35 use the New Testament word εὐαγγελίζω which certainly implies proclamation, however it specifically means the proclamation of the εὐαγγέλιον, which is translated “gospel.”²⁷

New Evangelism/Progressive Growth Evangelism: The new evangelism is Christian churches evangelizing through church planting.²⁸

Pastor: The title of pastor literally means “shepherd” and is virtually synonymous with the offices of “bishop” and “elder” within the books of Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5-7. Pastors have the responsibility for building up and watching over the congregation of the church.²⁹ Because the term “pastor” is not universally

²⁵ Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 44-45.

²⁶ G. William Schweer, "Evangelism" In , in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 518.

²⁷ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.

²⁸ Stafford, *Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples*.

²⁹ Elwell and Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, 993-994.

applicable in the small church in Sanilac County, for ease of understanding, “church leader(s)” is generic and includes “pastor(s),” “deacon(s),” “elder(s),” and any other(s) in “church leadership” within the workshop, unless otherwise indicated.

The Delimitations of the Project

Keeping the study within manageable boundaries, the researcher will delimit the scope of the project. The first delimitation is geographical, as Michigan’s Sanilac County will be the geographical focus of this study. The second delimitation is dimensional, as the small church will be the extent of the study. The third delimitation is categorical, as in the researcher’s experience, the study will encompass church leadership, customs, and unique challenges. However, there are numerous cultural possibilities. A fourth delimitation confines pastoral interviews to a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25. Fifth, pastoral interviews will be within conservative evangelical denominations. Lastly, the outcome must be a workshop that is teachable by pastors in their local church environment. As a quick guide to the delimitations of this project, refer to bullet points below.

- Geographical location: Michigan’s Sanilac County
- Dimensional extent: The small church
- Minimum categorical encompassment: leadership, customs, and unique challenges
- Pastoral interviews limited to a minimum of 15 and maximum of 25
- Pastoral interviews with conservative evangelical pastors

- Final product must be teachable by pastors

The Significance of the Project

This project is significant to the Christian community as it identifies areas of the small church in need of improvement and poses a solution to the deficit. This project is significant to the researcher because it involves his pastoral companions and his passion for life, the small church. The following are expositions on this study's potential impact on the Christian community, the researcher, and his ministry.

Professional Goals

The small church is God's primary mode of operation throughout the world.³⁰ A Hartford Institute study found fifty-nine percent of all churches average less than one-hundred attendees with a median attendance of seventy-five.³¹ Therefore, the majority of new pastors will begin fulltime ministry by serving in a small church. Gary McIntosh supports this further by estimating that eighty percent of the churches in existence average less than 200 members and fifty percent average less than 100 members.³²

Perception is important in today's culture. For example, the fast food chain McDonalds was accused of making America fat. Sales began to drop. In retaliation, McDonalds launched a campaign claiming to be dedicated to the health of America, which resulted in McDonalds adding alternatives such as applesauce and fruit to their menu. Subsequently, they did nothing to change their main meal portions. Sales returned

³⁰ Brandon J. O'Brien, *The Strategically Small Church* (Minneapolis: BethanyHouse, 2010), 30.

³¹ Hartford Institute for Religion Research, "What's the Average Size of U.S. Churches?"

³² McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*, 18.

with increases. It was public perception that caused the decline in sales, just as it was public perception that caused an increase. McDonalds did nothing but change public perception. How did they do this? McDonalds changed their image by adding select healthy items to the menu.³³

The small church appears minimally effective in the area of evangelism. Therefore, pastors who employ alternative evangelistic methods hope to transform the small church's view of outreach. The small church has a history of rejecting outside methods in order to preserve their current culture.³⁴ According to Burt and Roper in *The Little Church that Could*, the small church must realize and accept that they have the ability to change perception. They can claim their responsibility to mentor pastors at the local level, thus reaping the rewards of pastors trained in small church culture and customs.³⁵

Just as a bad perception of McDonalds affected their number of patrons, perception affects the size and success of the small church. A well functioning church offers much to its community. Furthermore, small churches have a responsibility to their country and their community to remain effective, thus encouraging moral ethics within places of employment. The decline of the small church caused by pastors who misunderstand small church attributes limits small church effectiveness. In turn, ethics decline causing undue stress on both industry and the individual. As reported by Andy

³³ Tim Manners, "McDonald's Gets McBetter," *The Hub Magazine*, NA.
<http://www.hubmagazine.com/2009/02/mcdonalds-gets-mcbetter-2/> (accessed July 31, 2012).

³⁴ Steve R. Bierly, *Help for the Small-Church Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 92.

³⁵ Steven E. Burt and Hazel Ann Roper, *The Little Church That Could* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000), 34-35.

Lewis, churches provide many positive benefits to its community. These include the improvement of religiosity resulting in positive social contributions and overall economic vitality.³⁶ Instituting pastoral training programs can improve domestic and religious life as the direction of the church convalesces. The following bullet points will simplify the goals.

- Improved nationwide work ethics
- Improved local work ethics
- Improved nationwide social ethics
- Improved local social ethics
- Improved public attitude toward the small church
- Improved Christian attitude toward the small church
- Improved view of small church

Personal Goals

The motivation behind most behavior is to improve both on a personal and professional level. This study is no different. There are several personal gains from the applied outcome of this study and even though these gains are personal, they benefit the researcher's ministry.

First, the research involved in this project will give depth to the researcher's understanding of pastoring the small church. Knowing how the small church functions and operates as an entity is important for pastoral success. The materials utilized to

³⁶ Andy Lewis, *Some Positive Benefits Churches Bring to Communities* (n.p.: Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, March 13, 2008), <http://erlc.com/article/some-positive-benefits-churches-bring-to-communities/> (accessed February 16, 2013).

complete this project hopefully provide insight into not only small church culture, but also leadership techniques proven successful in this setting. The discovery of this information will offer an opportunity for future success in the small church.

Second, there is satisfaction in knowing that this researcher is identifying and equipping pastors to deal with obstacles of their calling. Leaving a legacy is a goal accomplishable by implementing measures that will benefit future generations. The researcher hopes to accomplish that task through the results of this project. Satisfaction in one's work and one's life leads to professional competence and in turn assists in the progression of a valued leader within the Christian society.

Lastly, the results of the interviews will provide insight as the researcher attempts to understand Sanilac County's small church attributes. The simple discovery of other pastors who have dealt with the same issues is beneficial for encouragement. The following bullet points will highlight the researcher's personal goals.

- Further effectiveness through a deeper understanding of the small church
- Equip pastor to deal with obstacles
- Improve researcher's understanding of Sanilac County's small church attributes

Ministry Goals

The church needs to consider the three books called the Pastoral Epistles. Paul commands church leaders to invest in others, to "commit these things to faithful men" (2 Tim. 2:2). The ministry goal of the researcher is to create a workshop for the church designed to assist pastors in integrating into the small church. The creation of the workshop is the first of four steps in a plan to create a movement towards church educated pastors.

The first step is to create a workshop. The workshop includes specific areas of instruction for pastors based on Michigan's Sanilac County. From the researcher's experience, there are three possible primary focal areas for the workshop, although pastoral interviews will ultimately determine these areas. The first perceived focal area could be church leadership. Leadership is specific to geographical regions. Therefore, knowing how to identify the leadership attributes best suited for Michigan's Sanilac County may be useful information leading to pastoral success. The second perceived focal area could be church customs, which will investigate those items that are customary to specific churches. Knowing how to discover certain customs is helpful to pastors as they endeavor to serve their church. The third area could be the specific challenges that are indigenous to the small churches in Sanilac County. Much like leadership techniques and customs, successfully navigating each challenge within their geographical area is possible. However, those same challenges if unknown can prove to be disadvantageous to one's ministry. Creating the workshop makes steps two through four possible.

The second step is to demonstrate the need. Identifying the need on paper, for a new class, workshop, or conference is relatively easy. However, it is often difficult to demonstrate the need for a new idea to churches, church leaders, and other pastors. The studies presented validate a need for improving the combined efforts of the small church and the seminary. The biblical example is for church leaders to provide training for future or younger church leaders. However, the small church has a "this is how it has always been done" belief and convincing key people of the need to change can be challenging. Step two is then to validate the need by presenting brochures and introductory videos

designed to highlight the deficiency, the need, and the benefit of church-taught pastors. This introductory material leads to step three of this ministry plan.

Step three is to teach the workshop. Proper promotion will lead to churches that are interested in offering the workshop for their pastors and church leaders. It is the researcher's plan to teach the workshop in an effort to educate church leaders with a vision of change for the future. Workshops will not be limited to the local church. It is the hope of this researcher to offer large conference-style workshops along with internet and satellite classes, which will enable a larger number of small churches to follow a 2 Timothy example. Growth in popularity, vision, and need will bring about step four.

Step four is to expand the scope of education. After churches have caught the vision for change, the researcher plans to expand beyond the workshop to offer material for apprenticeships, and advanced pastoral education focusing on practical application. Seminaries do well in teaching the "what" of religion. The material expansions will focus on "how" to pastor effectively by hands on training.

The small church has a desire to preserve its heritage and its tradition; training pastors in small church attributes will progress their agenda. This researcher has a vision to help the small church by training pastors about the small church and more specifically, about the small church where they minister. Purposeful and specific training for pastors who want to be successful in small church ministry is the goal.

- Produce workshop
- Demonstrate the need
- Teach workshop in multiple venues
- Expand educational scope

The Assumptions of the Researcher

As with any written work, the author believes certain things of the reader, the material, and himself. Identifying these beliefs will help others understand the point of view taken by the researcher about the study. The following are the basic beliefs of this researcher as they apply to this research project.

First, the researcher believes the small church is unique. Small church culture is recognizable by the presence of governing patriarchal and/or matriarchal leader/s. The identifying factor of a large church culture is the presence of governing pastoral leadership. These unique differences thwart attempts at mixing cultural ideologies, as attempts to blend these cultures results in leadership conflict and congregational upheaval. The researcher believes, by God's design, the Bible is infallible and remains as a guide for the church in all its polity.

Second, the researcher believes that a seminary education primarily strengthens a pastor's cognitive capacity. These practices are necessary for understanding and teaching doctrine. Seminaries do well in teaching proper hermeneutics, homiletics, and theology. They also excel in teaching leadership techniques, including conflict management, and organization, along with many other disciplines in varied venues. However, in the researcher's experience improvements are possible in areas of practical application.

Third, the researcher believes the reader is interested in the small church. The number of people attending the small church indicates interest, as sixty percent of today's Protestants attend a church with less than one hundred attendees.³⁷ The large number of books authored about the subject also proves interest in the small church. Authors such as

³⁷ The Barna Group, *Small Churches Struggle to Grow Because of the People They Attract*.

Herbert Lucas and Kent Hunter were interested in improving the small church, as demonstrated by their writing *Christian Education and the Small Church* and *The Lord's Harvest and the Rural Church* respectively.³⁸ The design of this research project is to improve future leaders and the small church. The researcher believes the readers will value the research and the material produced.

Fourth, the researcher believes the chosen sources are applicable to the research project. This research will be of a practical nature and designed to benefit those in the field of church leadership. The researcher believes that the problem presented is solvable; however, it warrants future study on the topic. Therefore, this work will not be exhaustive and will leave opportunity for other researchers to debate, expound on or expand the scope, findings, or conclusions of the research.

Fifth, the researcher believes he is competent to complete this project. Completing this research is within the professional level of this researcher's expertise. The researcher assumes accurate completion of this project within the allotted time. As a quick guide to the researcher's assumptions refer to bullet points below.

- The small church is unique and small and large church methods do not mix
- Seminaries strengthen cognitive reflexes
- The topic is interesting to the target audience
- The research project is applicable
- The researcher is competent to complete the project

³⁸ Herbert L. Lucas, *Christian Education and the Small Church: A Specific Study of the Programs of a Group of Fourteen Congregations of the Church of God* (Anderson: School of Theology, Anderson College and Theological Seminary, 1956).; Kent R. Hunter, *The Lord's Harvest and the Rural Church* (Kansas City, MS: Beacon Hill Press, 1993).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The small church is a place of culture and family. In recent years, authors have spoken out about the small church, primarily because of the push toward big church conformity. In the introduction to *Christian Education in the Small Membership Church*, Karen Tye writes, “Super-size it! This is the mantra of our present culture.”³⁹ Of course, she was referring to everything from food to football games, but her book is all about the church.

Tye explains the value of the small church and the different educational approaches that must be taken compared to large churches. “One size doesn’t fit all,” as Gary McIntosh clearly states in his published conversation on the small church.⁴⁰ This is a book about two pastors engaged in months of conversation on the differences between small, medium, and large churches. McIntosh believes that, “Specific strategies for different size churches are necessary. Effective church leaders build on this fact.”⁴¹ So, there are many who recognize the very specific needs of the small church, but still others

³⁹ Karen Tye, *Christian Education in the Small Membership Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), Introduction.

⁴⁰ McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*.

⁴¹ Ibid., 19.

use their view of the Great Commission to force programmatic growth onto the small church.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **Go therefore and make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.⁴²

Many like to combine verse 19 from the above Matthew passage with Acts 2:40-42 from the passage below.

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and **that day about three thousand souls were added to them**. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:40-42).

Looking at these verses together brings some pastors to the conclusion that the church is not doing the former if the latter is not taking place. Restated, if the church is not adding thousands of members to their congregations, they are not fulfilling their part of The Great Commission. During recent interviews, Pastor James Perry and Reverend Michael Sanders reasoned the point quite adamantly that small churches today should just close their doors if they are not growing numerically.⁴³

⁴² *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Mt 28:18–20.; All Scriptures will be taken from the NKJV, 1982.

⁴³ Two separate interviews occurring on July 26, 2012. James Perry was interviewed in person at Countryside Free Methodist Church at 1:00 in the afternoon. He answered questions concerning his philosophy of ministry and church growth. Reverend Michael Sanders participated in a phone interview at 8:00 in the evening. This was conversation between friends. The researcher obtained permission to use the conversation about church growth in a future work. Sanders plans to complete his Doctor of Ministry project in the fall of 2013. His research is “The case for closing a small church.”

Others who hold this view have expressed it in literature. For instance, Nelson Searcy's book *Ignite*, suggests abandoning the family atmosphere of the small church and force growth by adding "big events." Big events are large occasions designed to provide opportunity for churches to present the message of Christ and add numerically to their congregations.

Searcy opens chapter 1 with Acts 2:41 and on the next page he writes, "So my team and I planned a new series and decided to kick it off with a big day. We broke through the 65 barrier. The next year, we planned three big days—and broke 125. Eventually big days helped us break 250, 500, and 1000."⁴⁴ Church leaders should agree with Searcy when he says, "our job is simply to share the gospel with as many people as possible," but leaders should take a long look at the motives for and methods behind small church growth.⁴⁵ Small church pastors have large church visions because the small church has allowed their focus for reproducing leaders who esteem small church values and biblical evangelism to change. Instead, large churches are stepping up and training pastors to meet their own needs.⁴⁶ Biblically, both small and large churches should be training pastors (2 Tim 2:2). The following sections will demonstrate a change of focus by the small church, as they attempt to preserve their traditional culture. Meanwhile, their future pastors receive training with an alternative focus. Bullet points listed below are for convenience.

⁴⁴ Searcy, *Ignite*, 25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴⁶ *A New Generation of Pastors Places Its Stamp on Ministry* (n.p.: Barna Group, Ltd, 2009, February 17, 2004), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/135-a-new-generation-of-pastors-places-its-stamp-on-ministry?q=evangelism> (accessed November 1, 2012).

- Biblical Reasoning
- Small Church Culture
- Proponents for Growth

Biblical Reasoning

Evangelism

William Schweer states, “While many think of evangelism as a NT phenomena, profound concern for all people is also obvious in the OT (1 Kings 8:41–45; Ps. 22:27–28; Isa. 2:2–4). God’s care for the first couple after they had sinned, His plan to “bless” all people through the Israelite nation, and His continuing attempts through the prophets and through discipline to forge His people into a usable nation all speak of His concern.”⁴⁷ These Old Testament Scriptures highlight the importance of evangelism to the God of Israel, whereas Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:15, and Luke 24:47 are three primary Scripture passages used by God to command New Testament evangelism. Not only does the Bible command teaching God’s principles, but it also contains examples of those who demonstrate how to teach these principles effectively. Christians, primarily church leaders, have been intrigued and some even obsessed, with this idea of evangelism and God’s promise for eternal life (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, it is important to consider two primary principles contained in the Bible. The first principle is the command to evangelize and the second is how to evangelize.

⁴⁷ G. William Schweer, "Evangelism" In , in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 518.

The authors of the Bible record multiple stories about people who spent a good portion of their lives proclaiming the message of God. The Old Testament tells of multiple saints who stood for the God of Israel and proclaimed his glory, grace, mercy, and his wrath. For example, a remarkable story of evangelism occurred in Babylon, as three of those saints appear in Daniel 3. Daniel records the story of three young Jewish Babylonian leaders, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They refused to bow to the image of gold built by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 3:13 reveals a raging angry king who by questioning the young men had determined that they were more dedicated to their God than to himself. He demanded the furnace stoked seven times hotter than usual. However, after having the three men thrown into the fire Nebuchadnezzar looked in to see four men unharmed by the flames; the fourth man was described in 3:25 as “the Son of God.” After this, the king stated publically, “There is no other God who can deliver like this” (3:29).

The people of the New Testament viewed evangelism with a new purpose as God provided the last sacrifice for their sins—Jesus. The author of Acts records the fascinating journey of a man who dedicated his life to Christ. Paul the Apostle traveled the known world with this new purpose. In Acts 21:27-34, Paul, grabbed and beaten by an angry mob, demonstrated the importance of his mission to spread the gospel. He was in danger of being stoned to death. However, after several hundred soldiers brought the crowd under control, Paul, chained to two guards and having no regard for personal safety, demanded an audience with the crowd so he could tell them about his Damascus experience where Jesus had changed his life.

Many more stories accompany these accounts. In Mark 5:20, a former demoniac excitedly shared about this man named Jesus who drove the demons out of him. The leper

in Luke 17:15 screamed glory to God after Jesus healed him. Jesus' disciples frequently spread his teaching (Luke. 19:37-38). At Jesus' birth, the shepherds told many concerning the Christ child in Luke 2:17. John 1:46 records Philip telling Nathanael. In Acts 18, Apollos taught the things of God along with Aquila and Priscilla. Philemon the slave owner spread the gospel message from his home as he held church services in his living room as recorded in Philemon 1:1-6.

Women also spread the gospel message. One must not overlook the woman at the well who went to town proclaiming Christ in John 4:29 or Anna from Jerusalem in Luke 2:38. Various people scattered throughout the lands preached and proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ to all who would listen (Acts 8:4; Acts 11:19-20). Some followers of the God of Israel are still just as charismatic about spreading His message today as those in the stories above. It is this command to "make disciples" that has caused some church leaders to understand that without thousands of souls coming to Christ daily they are failing Jesus' command in The Great Commission.

As the Bible presents people and situations of evangelism it becomes clear that The Great Commission is a primary function for the believer. However, modern culture has commercialized Christendom in such a way that the verses are merely a remembrance of days past, as a number of today's Christians are derelict in the proclamation of God. Certainly, the passages above are important and include such heroic stories like Steven in the book of Acts, the outspokenness of Onesiphorus in 2 Timothy 1:16, and Peter the famous "Rock" of the church as he preached in Acts 2 and 3. However, A.W. Pink writes of today's evangelism:

If the "message" now being delivered in Mission Halls be examined, if the "tracts" which are scattered among the unchurched masses be scrutinized,

if the “open-air” speakers be carefully listened to, if the “sermons” or “addresses” of a “Soul-winning campaign” be analyzed; in short, if modern “Evangelism” be weighed in the balances of Holy Writ, it will be found wanting—lacking that which is vital to a genuine conversion, *lacking* what is essential if sinners are to be shown their need of a Saviour, *lacking* that which will produce the transfigured lives of new creatures in Christ Jesus.⁴⁸

The proclamation occurring in Bible times solicited conversions that looked nothing like today’s conversion experiences. For example, the Samaritan woman at the well told several about her Savior (Jn. 4:28). Today’s converts seldom tell anyone in such a way. Moreover, would the typical Christian of today leave a legacy equally comparable to that of those who convinced Nebuchadnezzar in the above story in Daniel 3?

Christian politics have been used to soften doctrine so it is palatable to the public. Pink weighs in on “the soul-deceiving character of most of the ‘Evangelism’ of this degenerate and apostate generation,” warning of the deception that is coming from even orthodox churches.

Those who really receive the “message” which is now being given out from most of the “orthodox” pulpits and platforms today, are being fatally deceived. It is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but unless God sovereignly intervenes by a miracle of grace, all who follow it will surely find that the ends thereof are the ways of death. Tens of thousands who confidently imagine they are bound for Heaven, will get a terrible disillusionment when they awake in Hell.⁴⁹

Admittedly, there are churches of who stray from orthodox biblical teaching in an attempt to influence their congregation in a less than godly direction. There are

⁴⁸ Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Arthur Pink Anthology*, vol. 16, bk. 12 of *Studies in the Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems., 2005).

⁴⁹ Pink, *The Arthur Pink Anthology*.

also those who mislead, misrepresent, and lie from the pulpit. However, Pink is not referring to these kinds of deception. He is referring to evangelists who appear harmless, or those who believe they are right in God's eyes, but use evangelistic methods that make light of sin while offering access to salvation that promotes a lack of heart change. Most of them view evangelism as a necessary command and they are willing to leave a heroic legacy equal to those in the Scriptures above. With this realization comes a desire to maximize potential or use methods contrary to their present church culture. Even though small church culture dictates that, it is the pastor's job to evangelize and not the congregation's, the pastor understands the Bible's view of the subject, as it includes congregational evangelism. However, lack of congregational cooperation has pressured small church pastors to turn to the evangelistic approach Pink warns against, which today is called the programmatic approach to evangelism.⁵⁰ This pressure originates in the pastors' understanding of success, typically measured by numerical values.

Peter states in 1 Peter 2:9 that Christians are God's chosen people. They are royalty, special, and holy. Their job is to "proclaim...Him." Peter continues in 4:10-11 to say that each has received a gift and one should speak about God as though he were an oracle of God. Christians have the responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. All believers are accountable for evangelism or sharing the message of Christ.

⁵⁰ Stafford, *Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples*.

Mark Dever writes, “Christians often leave evangelism to ‘the professionals’ out of a sense of inadequacy...”⁵¹ Unfortunately, many small church members fit this category and leave evangelism to their pastors, or to other churches. God has clearly left evidence as to who is to evangelize. The Bible gives many examples of those who set a precedent for evangelism and it reminds believers that it is their duty to evangelize. With the precedent established, it is important to return to the Scripture from the previous section.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **Go therefore and make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen (Matt. 28:18-20).

Unfortunately, many small church congregations overlook these passages as though they apply to someone else. Large congregations are less inclined to adopt this same view because by their very nature, they emphasize numerical growth. The church growth movement has pushed for a focus on evangelism attempting to force the small church into a growth rather than a relational centrality. Steve Runge identifies two imperatives in this set of Scriptures from *The Lexham High Definition New Testament: ESV Edition*, “*matheteusate*,” and “*idou*.” The second imperative translated “lo” or “behold” by the ESV is an interjection imperative and denotes pure emphasis, which is drawing attention to what God is going to say next. In today’s language, it would be the same thing as saying, “Hey! Listen up!” or “Can I have your attention please!” It simply denotes something of

⁵¹ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 120.

importance is coming.⁵² The first, *matheteusate*, is translated “make disciples,” which is a verbal imperative meaning a command that requires action.

Shannon O’Dell, a proponent of the missional movement, stresses this command above all others in *Transforming Church in Rural America*.⁵³ He proves this by entering a small church and forcing change toward growth. He writes of his struggles in changing the church traditions saying, “I naively thought that everyone in the congregation really wanted to change...we crashed into the sacred-cow pews, our congregation had a true ‘collision of vision’ that revealed the differences in how we truly looked at change.”⁵⁴ This is typical of the small church, and pastors should know these things before entering the pastorate of the small church. Unfortunately, O’Dell’s fervor for evangelism and church growth does not always prove positive. His view, shared by many, has caused conflict in the small church.

Conflict also stems from an overzealous view of Acts 2.

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and **that day about three thousand souls were added to them**. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:40-42).

Either pastors like O’Dell, Searcy, and Perry understand Acts 2 to be a sign from God of his approval and often push small congregations to the brink of closure, or

⁵² Steven Runge, *The Lexham High Definition New Testament: ESV Edition* (Logos Bible Software, 2008), Mt 28:18-20.

⁵³ O’Dell, *Transforming Church in Rural America*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 73

they cause conflict for all parties involved. Whatever the case, Pink identifies the result as destruction for tens of thousands.⁵⁵

One of this Scripture's purposes is to demonstrate the power of God moving to convert men, but is every church expected to produce converts because of this one example? Are churches that remain small complacent and out of God's will? These questions, posed for others, are beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, they are part of the reason pastors are taking a programmatic approach to the small church. The question is, "What training can the local church offer to better equip pastors for small church ministry?" The example is in the biblical characters above.

Biblical Leadership

The authors of *The Good Book on Leadership* begin their introduction by asking, "What is the greatest need in today's church?" The answer to this question summarizes the issues presented above. "It is not more money, new buildings, bigger buildings, new workable methods, more workers, or any of the other "things" we throw at the church's problems. The greatest need of the church is leadership...biblical leadership."⁵⁶ However, what is biblical leadership? Numerous people in the Bible demonstrate biblical leadership. Leadership styles vary, but good biblical leadership centers on relationships. Building and

⁵⁵ Pink, *The Doctrines of Election and Justification*.

⁵⁶ John Borek, Danny Lovett, and Elmer Towns, *The Good Book on Leadership* (Nashville: B&H, 2005), 1.

maintaining relationships adds trust and validity to a leader, culminating in a successful legacy.

Moses was one of the most legendary relational leaders. He led the nation out of Egyptian captivity and took them toward the land God had promised (Ex. 12:31-35). He led six hundred thousand men plus women and children out of Egypt, into the wilderness, and cared for their needs as God allowed. Exodus 18:13 indicates Moses' extreme care as he demonstrated relational leadership to these people by personally teaching each one how to apply God's conventional principles to their lives.⁵⁷ Moses, taking time for his people, sat down and was available to those in need. His prayer for food, water, and safety (Ex. 16-17) also showed personal care as he continued to build relationships in order to gain credibility, and support from the Israelites.

Leading through disciple-making is another form of relational leadership. In the example of the Apostle Paul, Paul mentored Timothy, teaching him how to live a God-honoring life by building relationships. The opening statements of 1 Timothy reveal that the primary purpose for Timothy staying in Ephesus is to demonstrate love from a pure heart (1 Tim. 1:5). Love is the foundation of relational leadership. Paul wrote, with Timothy by his side, the introduction to Colossians praising the people for having love for all the saints. This demonstration of love is an outpouring of Paul's relational style of leadership. Colossians 3:12-17 exemplifies love as the "bond of perfection."

⁵⁷ John I. Durham, vol. 3, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 247.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But **above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Col.3:12-17).

Relational leadership includes loving those who will follow. Moses showed this through his care and compassion just as Paul, in the manner of a father, taught Timothy. Both show how to be effective leaders through relational means. Even though Moses and Paul are great examples of relational leaders other biblical characters such as Joshua, King David, Daniel, Peter the “Rock” of the church, or even Barnabas the great evangelist, could be discussed in accordance with relational leadership. Jesus was the perfect man and is the perfect example of leading through relationship building.

Jesus was by the Lake of Gennesaret in Luke 5:1. A group of people gathered to hear his teaching. Eager to hear everything they began to decrease their proximity to Jesus. Jesus, close to two boats, climbed inside, and asked Simon to push out a little from shore. He used the acoustically positive setting to project his voice as he sat and taught from the boat. It is important to notice that Jesus did not stand at a pulpit nor did he stay on shore and attempt to shout to the crowd. He valued a personal, compassionate, and relational approach to teaching.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 14-15.

In another instance recorded in Matthew 9:10, Jesus took his disciples to the house of Levi/Matthew, the tax collector, for supper. Imagine, as they sat down and enjoyed each other's company discussing the happenings of the day. The table was full of delicious food, as the tax collectors were wealthy and would have had the best food available. This was a genuine treat for Jesus and his party, since they were accustomed to fish and bread (Matt. 14:17; Jn. 21:12-13). Jesus used this time to teach his disciples how to build relationships in order to gain the opportunity to teach about mercy and repentance. Supper with the "undesirables" afforded Jesus the opportunity not only to teach the evening's hosts, but also the Pharisees. The entire event was a demonstration of relational leadership.

The New Testament is full of stories like these where Jesus has taken interest in people by spending time with them and teaching God's truth. However, the story from John 13:12-27 of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples has no equal. Jesus and twelve disciples were in a place called the upper room in the city of Jerusalem. They were eating once again, or preparing to eat, when Jesus stood. Taking a bowl and pitcher of water, he began to wash the feet of his disciples. He was teaching servitude.

Jesus knew that for the disciples to spread the message of the gospel successfully they would have to use servant leadership techniques. The servant leader is someone who, to be effective, gives care and love as he builds relationships. Jesus taught relational and servant leadership together, as they are inseparable. One cannot serve people effectively without first building relationships. Jesus did just that; he built relationships and showed servitude,

which gained trust and people followed. Relational leadership is putting on love and is the leadership approach taught by Christ. It remains expected today within the culture of the small church.

Mandate to Train leaders

Throughout the discussion of relational leadership above is the undertone of a mandate to train leaders. This mandate is found in 1 Timothy 1:18, 2 Timothy 2:2, and Titus 1:5. Paul stresses in 2 Timothy 2:2 the importance of equipping men of godly character for leadership in the church. Timothy was not only a teacher; he was tasked to equip others to be teachers of God's word.⁵⁹ Involved in this task is the protection of proper doctrine and the importance to guard one's heart against the present evil.

One should notice Moses from the examples above. Moses, an extreme relational leader, understood the importance of training leaders. God gave Moses a mandate to train Joshua for leadership (Num. 27:18). According to MacArthur, Joshua was Moses' "personal minister" and the one being "groomed for military leadership in Israel."⁶⁰ The training of Joshua was personal, called in today's terms an apprenticeship. Joshua was close to Moses. Moses records in Exodus 24:13 that he took his assistant to the mountain where God was waiting. Joshua was also with Moses when he returned from the mountain and witnessed the people of Israel worshiping a calf they had made (Ex. 32:17). He studied how his mentor handled the situation, learning how to control the mantle of

⁵⁹ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 4, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 246.

⁶⁰ *The MacArthur Study Bible*, ed. John MacArthur, Jr., electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), Ex 17:9.

leadership. After many years of grooming and the passing of Moses, God commissioned Joshua as Israel's leader (Joshua 1:1-10).

The New Testament is not without its leaders who embraced the vision to train other leaders. Paul, of course, trained Timothy. One must not fail to consider Jesus, as he trained leaders to continue his work. Jesus chose twelve whom he knew would succeed him in carrying on his methods and message. The disciples were mentored in much the same way as Joshua. Jesus held them closely and taught them through personal experiences as they observed and learned how to advance the gospel both personally and globally.

Jesus taught the disciples while doing ministry. Jesus did not separate the act of ministry and the act of teaching like the church has done today. This observation is essential for understanding how pastors were educated in the early church. Jesus going to the tax collector's house for supper was ministry. It was the central idea of a new religious movement. The Pharisees kept their distance from those who were considered immoral or unclean, but Jesus went to those who needed him stating, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Matt. 9:12). Matthew records that the disciples were by Jesus' side for this occasion, as they were on many other occasions in Jesus' ministry. He, like Moses and Paul accepted the responsibility to teach others to be ministers of the gospel. Just as Paul taught Timothy the cultural issues of the early church, there are recognizable culture issues in today's small church. The following section will identify a portion of small church culture according to some prominent authors.

Small Church Culture

Steve Bierly has written a beneficial little book titled *Help for the Small-Church Pastor*.⁶¹ This book has been extremely helpful in understanding the small church. Bierly begins with stories of struggling pastors. The situations are real, as they can happen to any small church pastor. Bierly states new pastors felt inadequate preparation for the task of pastoring. The situations described tell of the inevitable power struggle with the matriarch or patriarch of the small church, much like the pastor from the introduction.

Having been indoctrinated in the “Hard Work Guarantees Results” school of thinking, the seminary graduate accepts his or her first call confident that a well-stocked personal library, subscriptions to quality pastoral journals, a phone network of friends who can dispense good advice, and time set aside to use all the above will lead to church growth, a spiritually-mature congregation, and offers from larger churches. The conferences and seminars the pastor attends reinforce this mindset. They teach that everything rises and falls on leadership. If you are a strong, knowledgeable, hard-working leader, the sky is the limit for your church (not to mention your career).

It all sounds good. It even sounds noble. “I accept full responsibility for the state of my congregation. A group can only go as high as its leader will take it. I’m going to work my hardest to take my church higher and higher. No excuses. If my congregation goes nowhere, it will only be because I have been sluffing off on the job.” But there’s one little problem with believing that effort, study, and good resources will bring success—it doesn’t always work in the real world.⁶²

Many pastors can understand this excerpt. They have the idea that theology, doctrine, philosophy, and pastoral leadership are the only resources needed for ministry. Bierly continues to explain this in the world of the small church. He describes the small church as “a group determined to stay together, who work to

⁶¹ Bierly, *Help for the Small-Church Pastor*.

⁶² Ibid., 26.

preserve their traditions, who are led by a few key figures, and who are often suspicious, if not contemptuous, of outsiders.”⁶³ He also points out that the small church will not follow an outsider and to the congregation a new pastor is an outsider.

Bierly identifies how the small church is different, and encourages the small church pastor to grow in patience and the confidence that God will eventually move in the people’s hearts. The stories and principles taught in this book should be a prerequisite for all of those planning to be a small church pastor.

Anthony Pappas wrote another book for helping readers understand the small church, *Entering the World of the Small Church*. It too explains the oddities of the small church in comparison to the projected idea of what church should look like. Pappas shares a story about a time when he decided his “parish needed to grow, develop, and progress.”⁶⁴ He admits that he was not equipped. He went to the local bookstore and bought everything he could find on growing the church. He found many success stories that included stepped programs and useful diagrams on how to move the church forward, but they were all examples from large churches. He found little about helping the small church to grow.

Throughout his book, Pappas follows suit with Bierly in explaining the factors that makes a small church unique. Detailed in stories of life’s experiences, he shows the customs and habits within the small church. Pappas continually demonstrates the learning curve for the small church pastor, much of which

⁶³ Bierly, *Help for the Small-Church Pastor*, 41.

⁶⁴ Anthony G. Pappas, *Entering the World of the Small Church* (NA: Alban Institute, 2000), 15.

appears to be on-the-job-training. Pappas relays the all-important fact that the pastor of a small church must first learn the church's story and then become a part of the story before he is able to write his own story of growth. For example Pappas states, "Story is at the heart of small-church life."⁶⁵ Right or wrong, according to Pappas, it takes time to change the small church because stories develop as relationships grow.

James L. Killen, in his work, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, states, "Only a pastor who has won the trust of the congregation through building good pastoral relationships will have any chance to lead the churches through the needed changes."⁶⁶ His heart and desire to see the small church flourish is clear throughout the work. The story in chapter 1 about the young pastor meeting the suntanned man with the rattling old pick-up truck was Killen reminiscing fond memories of yesteryear.

This work centers on the job of a pastor as shepherd. Each chapter highlights challenges for the small church pastor that will make him more effective. Small church leadership is personal and relational. Pastoring the small church takes patience and finesse. People are hurting, they have lost loved ones, they are terminally ill, or have other crises in their life. Reaching more lost people will not solve these problems or bring comfort. However, managing evangelism and shepherding the congregation often collides and one wins, excluding the other.

⁶⁵ Pappas, *Entering the World of the Small Church*, 127.

⁶⁶ Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 8-9.

Killen describes an aspect of the small church that is often lacking in larger churches namely intimacy. The intimacy found among the people of a small church is not reproducible. Dave Browning has and is still attempting to reproduce intimacy in the large church (as discussed in the next section). The intimacy expressed by Killen, Pappas, and Bierly are genuine and unique to small congregations, so should they desire to become large? Ironically, as small church pastors advocate growth (impact), large church pastors are striving for intimacy.

Proponents for Growth

A primary focus for pastors regardless of the size of their church is numerical growth. However, the avenue of growth represents the concerns of the authors throughout this section. Leadership Network's Dave Browning is one of those pastors who is attempting to embrace the intimacy of the small church through a megachurch model.⁶⁷ He has developed a church that is many churches at home and many large churches on worship day. Seventeen-thousand worshipers do not travel from all over the world to church once a week, rather there are large and small gatherings that serve as one mega church. Browning calls it networking mega with micro.⁶⁸ This is how he explains Christ the King Community Church, International, "We are not combining just smallness with largeness but two things that are much more significant. We are fusing *intimacy* (a personal, relational, transparent church) and *impact* (a powerful, relevant, and

⁶⁷ Dave Browning, *Hybrid Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 3.

⁶⁸ Mainstream evangelicals would call this a denomination.

transformative church) to create a third form, and that is what a hybrid is.”⁶⁹ This is one example of a pastor who recognizes the differences between the large and small church. He is attempting to embrace the best of both worlds.⁷⁰

Browning is at the very least recognizing that small churches have their own culture. It is unfortunate that this admission is coming from an Emerging Church and not from traditional evangelicals. Those in the Emerging movement have been on the outskirts of Christianity since their conception in 1984.⁷¹ Skimming the edge or as Elijah in 1 Kings 18:21 calls it faltering between two opinions, is where they like to dwell.⁷²

Browning ends chapter 3 with an example of evangelistically living on the edge.

A story that was reported to me by one of our CTK [Christ the King Community Church] pastors illustrates the both/and nature and context of today’s ministry. It is the story of a man who, one night a week, does something unusual to reach his neighbors. He fills an ice chest with beers, rolls up his garage door, turns on his propane patio-heater, sets out a circle of chairs, and invites guys to come over for a drink after work. It is not a Bible-study group by any means. It is bridge activity. Over time, this neighborhood hangout has grown in popularity so that now nearly all the men in the neighborhood look forward to it. It has become this man’s ministry to build relationships. He decided he needed to do something much more aggressive to reach his neighbors for Christ.

At the same time, this man is also involved each week in hardcore Bible study, where he can strengthen his faith. Even as he is reaching out quite intentionally, he feels an even greater need for godliness. So he does both—the beer ministry on one night, the deeper Bible study on another. This is different from the old days, when we might have had a simple

⁶⁹ Browning, *Hybrid Church*, 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷¹ NA, *Leadership Network Celebrates 20 Years of Equipping Innovative Church Leaders* (n.p.: Newswire Association LLC., 2005), <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Leadership+Network+Celebrates+20+Years+of+Equipping+Innovative+Church...-a0129467192> (accessed July 30, 2012).

⁷² Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005), 1 Kgs 18:21.

Bible study in our homes and then tried to invite our neighbors. In today's hybrid world, we need to be more relationally and biblically extraordinary than that. This story of balanced extremes is instructive to the entire church, in my opinion. We need to move swiftly to the edges.⁷³

The man from this example has utilized methods that are questionable to traditional evangelicals, but acceptable to those in the Emerging Church movement. Traditionalism dictates Christians maintain a safe distance from the appearance of sin and even sinners. However, those within the Emerging movement dwell within close proximity to both in hopes of progressing The Great Commission. Moving to the edges for a small church is impossible, as their traditions will not knowingly allow questionable behaviors. The small church typically would not sanction an event such as the one above. Browning has fused the identity of the small and large churches into what he called a hybrid, which is another example of an attempt to move the small church forward but instead has resulted in the imposition of foreign culture on the small church.

The Christian community must admit that a select few of the Emerging tactics work to reach lost people. However, what is the price? Would it not be easier to teach pastors the ways of the small church so that this type of trial and error does not cause cultural ambiguity in the small church? Browning makes a case for a both/and combination of small/large but he loses both churches' identity in the process.

Steven Burt and Hazel Ann Roper identify a major part of the growth problem within the small church. Students leave seminary searching for "bigger

⁷³ Browning, *Hybrid Church*, 70.

and better.”⁷⁴ This “bigger and better” mentality stems from the seminary as they utilize primarily theory, biblical insights, and dogma, but with little application. The authors continue to write, “If it is true that most seminarians (regardless of age, interests, or experiences) serve the small church as their first pastorate, then the impact of their seminary education is bound to influence the life of the congregations they are called to serve.”⁷⁵ This is exactly what this ministry project is designed to identify. It also identifies that, “New methods and programs may not be beneficial,” to the small church, because “When a seminarian imposes on the small church ministry concepts more useful in mid-range and large churches, the result will be discomfort.”⁷⁶

Roper’s insight in identifying the problems that are hurting the small church is elementary within a systematic evaluation. If it does not work, identify the reason for the failure. Suggesting solutions should always come after diagnosing the problem, which is not always the case with the small church. For example, pastors have attempted to align the evangelistic efforts of the small church with those from the large church, instead of first identifying the needs of the small church. One of those needs is to train their pastors in traditional small church evangelistic methods. The small church is resilient and in order to survive will refuse new evangelistic methods.

⁷⁴ Burt and Roper, *The Little Church That Could*, 42.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 43.

Burt and Roper suggest, “The best way seminaries can assist modest-size congregations is to offer courses with a deliberate focus on small church life and ministry and to use the companionship rather than the manager model of pastor-people relationships.”⁷⁷ Seminaries put little companionship style leadership into the hands of their students and graduates. Therefore, small churches must remain focused on preserving culture rather than following the manager model of leadership within seminary ideologies. Most small churches remain in survival mode, meaning that they do only what is necessary to remain true to their traditions. Moreover, church professionals assail churches, giving them advice about the music they should be playing, how replacing the pews with chairs will bring in the crowd, and how they need to invite the public to get involved. These things destroy the esteem of small churches because they view them as personal attacks on how they do church. Burt and Roper in their work, *The Little Church That Could*, identify the issues and suggest rebuilding and replacing the lost esteem of the small church. Perhaps the best place to begin is educating pastors about the positive qualities of the small church.

A significant little book by Brandon J. O’Brien titled *The Strategically Small Church* accomplishes this task.⁷⁸ Jim Belcher writes in the Forward, “It is my hope that small-church pastors, leaders, and members will read this book and stop wasting valuable energy trying to imitate large-church ministry, and instead

⁷⁷ Burt and Roper, *The Little Church That Could*, 43.

⁷⁸ O’Brien, *The Strategically Small Church*.

recognize the inherent and strategic strengths of small churches.”⁷⁹ O’Brien helps to identify and build focus on the strengths of the small church. He uses the term “small” somewhat ambiguously, as he includes larger churches that have a small church mentality.

This is not another book like Browning’s *Hybrid Church*.⁸⁰ O’Brien does not center his argument on growing the small church because it has the potential to overcome its smallness. He also does not identify the stagnate small church as healthy. O’Brien thinks the small church is “dead, dull, and boring” and he wrote this book to change that perception. He also wrote it for the traditionalist who values the preacher and who thinks the small church still has the potential within itself to overcome its obstacles.

O’Brien adds to the discussion about church growth by calling for an authentic church. Authentic in his terms means without pretense. For example, people are allowed to serve in the small church because they enjoy doing so, not because they are good at the ministry they are performing. This would never be the case in a church with sights set on numerical growth. Programmatic numerical growth comes with perfection, where everything must be “just so” or people will not attend.

The small church should just be real.⁸¹ Some pastors bring in ideas that fail to fit the church, trying to run multiple programs, putting on big productions,

⁷⁹ O’Brien, *The Strategically Small Church*, 11.

⁸⁰ Browning, *Hybrid Church*.

⁸¹ O’Brien, *The Strategically Small Church*, 71.

using lights and big bands on Sunday morning. All of this represents the small church trying to be something it is not. O'Brien believes that genuineness brings growth. A church should be a place where one can relax and forget about putting on airs. However, others think that the church is not effective in today's culture without a marketing ploy.

O'Brien quotes Reggie McNeal as he describes a shift in the role of pastor:

The church growth movement presented a steep learning curve to church leaders. Ministers who had studied theology, biblical exegesis, and other subjects in classical seminary education now signed up for marketing seminars and business courses, subscribed to the Harvard Business Review, and joined the American Management Association.⁸²

It appears that large church leaders are forgetting that Christ is building the church on people and not on gimmicks, marketing ads, and fancy programs. Glen Daman, a man who has not forgotten how to be a shepherd, authors this last book titled, *Shepherding the Small Church*.⁸³ Presented in this discussion of proponents of church growth are several views, progressing from erroneous opinion to biblically sound stances. Of the previous books in this section, this one by Daman has by far the most biblical approach to the small church.

Daman begins much differently from most authors writing about church growth, as he writes, "The vitality of a congregation is not found in its size or in its programs or budget. The vitality of a congregation is found in its fulfillment of

⁸² Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 24-25.

⁸³ Glenn C. Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008).

God's purpose for the Church."⁸⁴ It is important to notice the focus in these two sentences. Daman is not concerned with anything other than "God's purpose." The other growth books in this section hardly give God a second thought. Even though O'Brien's book builds on biblical principles, his focus is on the church, not God's will for the church.

There is no point to church if God is not in the equation. Pastors want effectiveness; they want big numbers, big programs, big productions, big days, and big events. All this can be for the wrong reasons. Daman lists what effectiveness is and is not.

Effectiveness is not...

- Effectiveness is not determined by the number of members on the role
- Effectiveness is not determined by programs
- Effectiveness is not determined by outward behavior
- Effectiveness is not determined by a specific format

Effectiveness is...

- Effectiveness is defined by transformation
- Effectiveness is defined by biblical and theological integrity
- Effectiveness is defined by faith
- Effectiveness is defined by relationships
- Effectiveness is defined by service

⁸⁴ Glenn C. Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 16.

- Effectiveness is defined by relevancy⁸⁵

It is clear that according to Daman, effectiveness is not consistent with the aspects a megachurch exhibits. So what should churches teach? The answer is located in things that are effective in ministry: relevancy, service, relationships, faith, integrity, and transformation.

Daman does not linger on the definition of effectiveness, he continues with the purpose of the book, which is to teach five steps to an effective ministry within the small church. These five steps are:

1. Understand—know the Culture.
2. Know—develop the foundational Theology.
3. Be—develop the foundational Character.
4. Do—develop the Mission.
5. Envision—develop the Vision.⁸⁶

Understanding culture is not simply limited to the geographic area where the church is located; it also entails the culture within the church. Daman stresses that every church has individual culture. The pastor must know this culture to minister effectively. Knowing the church's culture means understanding where the leadership lies and how things are accomplished. In most small churches, the answer is going to be "because that's the way we do it." It also means understanding how to teach the church. Trial and error take valuable time and causes conflict for each party involved. Proper training is the better option.

Daman outlines the organization of the church and teaches, "Theology is necessary for a proper worldview."⁸⁷ Furthermore, participating in evangelism is

⁸⁵ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 16-20.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 22.

not wrong or improper, but the methods of implementation should be within the loving character of God. “The ministry of the church stands or falls, not by the programs, but by the character of the church. When assessing the church, often numbers, variety, and nature of the programs receive the focus contrary to spiritual health. If the spirituality of the church becomes weak, however, the ministry will be greatly hindered, with little or no eternal accomplishments achieved.”⁸⁸

The goal of ministry is eternal accomplishments. Instituting programs with the goal of accomplishing a larger crowd means little. Daman teaches that Christians must love people to reach people. Loving people does not mean merely inviting it means invite and follow-up. What do today’s Christian organizations teach? Do they teach O’Dell’s ideology of taking over the small church and forcing it to grow? Do they teach Browning’s hybrid ideology of losing the small church’s identity? Do they teach Daman’s ideology that is grounded in theology and loving people toward effective ministry through relationships? Alternatively, are they purely academic in their approach, teaching only doctrine without application?

Conclusion

There is a basic assumption that every believer is to evangelize, as proven through the Scriptures above. Moreover, the past contains many arguments concerning the mode

⁸⁷ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 77.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

and method of evangelism. Today is no different. The modern culture of today's society causes difficulty for churches to implement any type of effective outreach. For this reason, men and women have devised unique ways to reach those who do not know Christ. Those ways are most notably through the development of programs within the church.

The small church has fought and rejected such programs because it threatens their culture, their comfortable way of life. Consequently, they sit dormant waiting for Christ to return hoping that he will not cast them aside for failing or ignoring The Great Commission and possessing little faith. Several issues drive this impasse; however, complacency is the primary issue. Should the small church evangelize at all costs, even if it means losing their identity, or is there an avenue for the small church that would be acceptable to the congregation while preserving their personality?

Pastors must be trained in the customs of the small church for it to rise from its current position. The 1989 Schaeffer Institute study, previously cited, shows pastors have felt inadequately prepared to perform their duties.⁸⁹ Is the answer to this problem an eradication of the small church by forcing it to conform to large church ideals? Killen states, "Only a pastor who has won the trust of the congregation through building good pastoral relationships will have any chance to lead the churches through the needed changes." Small churches accomplish this by educating pastors in their culture, leadership, and unique challenges.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Krejcir, *Statistics on Pastors*.

⁹⁰ Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 8-9.

While considering these questions, it is prudent to bear in mind the information given by the authors above who have written on the subject. Each one has identified the central problem as a lack of growth in the small church. Some have stated the problem explicitly and others have presented solutions to the problem without blaming the small church.

Growth is not typically an issue for larger churches because large churches generally focus activities around outreach programs and serving the community, which brings growth. When writing about church growth the authors indirectly point at the primary problem, which is the large majority of Christians affiliated with the small church environment. These people hold firm to their culture, but do not consider how much more effective they would be by investing in future leaders. Pastors must be educated as to the problems and condition of the small church before they enter the field. Small church leaders are not teaching pastors about the church's inherent attributes. Pastoral education offered by the church is necessary for informing and training pastors and is required for successfully leading the small church. The next chapter will highlight the procedures this researcher will use to aid in solving the problem.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop a workshop for the local church designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. The design of this project was to answer the question, “What training can the local church offer to better equip pastors for small church ministry in Michigan’s Sanilac County?” The researcher answered this question by exploring the principles of the small church, producing a workshop for teaching pastors how to discover the particular attributes within their small churches and evaluating the workshop through questionnaires. Subsequent is the design and description of the project, followed by the schedule for completion.

Project Design

This project falls under the category of Ministry Research as described on page five in Temple Baptist Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry Program Overview and Guide 2012-13. The researcher recognized a need for teaching pastors how to recognize the attributes that exists in their church. The researcher identified recourse data that states pastors feel unprepared for their role as church leaders.⁹¹ This project was designed to

⁹¹ Krejcir, *Statistics on Pastors*.

address these facts and assist in better equipping pastors to understand the attributes of the small church.

Project Description

This ministry research project was for the researcher to develop a workshop for the local church that is designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. The workshop encompassed pastoral interviews, pertinent literature, and, as workshop illustrations, the researcher's experiences. First, compiling information for the workshop began by conducting pastoral interviews and continued by identifying correlating material. The researcher's related experiences serve only as illustrative points within the workshop. The researcher interviewed fifteen pastors who are currently serving or have served in a small church in Sanilac County. The interviews consisted of questions that probed for information concerning essential principles about the small church that would influence a pastor's effectiveness.

Second, analyzing the information received from the pastoral interviews provided a base for the workshop material. Pastors who have experienced much in ministry have valuable insight to offer other pastors. At this stage of the project, the researcher analyzed the material gathered through his sources. The researcher looked for specific reoccurring items and items that seemed to apply directly to the success of small church pastors.

Third, the researcher produced a workshop for pastors that can be completed in no less than six hours of instructional time. Ideally, the workshop would begin on a Friday night and conclude before noon on Saturday. However, material could be presented in one day with a short recess for lunch. The material is also easily adaptable to most teaching formats and/or timeframes, such as weekly mentoring classes, nightly seminars

or monthly leadership training. Although the workshop is in a lecture format, it includes visual aids in the form of a Power Point presentation. The material is organized in such a way as to make it possible for any average pastor to teach, however optimal instruction will be through an experienced pastor, lay leader, denominational representative or seminary professor.

Lastly, the researcher obtained evaluations from the interviewed pastors concerning the workshop material. The researcher provided a copy of the workshop material to all the pastors that participated in the pastoral interviews. Accompanying the workshop material was a questionnaire suitable for evaluating the usefulness of the material in small churches based in Michigan's Sanilac County.

- Gathered source material
- Analyzed and organized source material
- Produced workshop material with visual aids
- Evaluated workshop through questionnaires

Projected Schedule

1. Doctor of Ministry Project Proposal	September 15
2. First Draft of Project Report	January 15
3. Final Draft of Project Report	March 15
4. Oral Defense	April 15

Conclusion

The preceding information detailed the methodology this researcher used for this ministry research project. Included are the project design, which recorded the type and purpose of the project, the project description, and the project schedule. The project design included four steps. The first step was to obtain research data. The second step was to analyze that research data. The third step was to create a workshop from the data, and the last step was to evaluate the workshop. The subsequent chapter presents the data collected, the categorical results from analyzing the data and statistical evaluation data obtained from the participating pastors.

CHAPTER IV

PROJECT FINDINGS, RESULTS, AND EVALUATION

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop a workshop for the local church designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting.⁹² The workshop's foundation and contents originated from pastoral interviews in consensus with pertinent literature, which culminated in the identification of areas of importance for the workshop material. The workshop's materials were not predetermined nor were pertinent literature, thus not all the literature was included in the Literature Review. The following is a presentation of the research performed detailing pastoral interviews, followed by a demonstration of consensus literature. The researcher's personal ministry experience connects the research with the practical application of the workshop through illustrative points within the workshop. Workshop evaluations are subsequent.

Research Interviews

Selection of Participants

The participants for this research were selected at random through an internet search for Sanilac County churches. Results were narrowed by identifying protestant

⁹² Appendix 6, 147.

churches that averaged less than one hundred in Sunday morning attendance. This researcher contacted churches at random from the internet list of current churches. Pastors who were unwilling to participate and the researcher's inability to establish contact narrowed the field further. Participants were of various protestant denominations. Participants have or are pastoring a church of one hundred or less in weekly attendance in Michigan's Sanilac County. Respect for anonymity and confidentiality has led the researcher to assign participants a random letter of the alphabet, for example A, B, C and so forth. Assigning alpha naming or pseudonyms to the participants provides the researcher with a wider degree of latitude for reporting data without participants experiencing unnecessary repercussions or embarrassment from that data report. However, due to the size and relational aspects of Sanilac County, interview responses will be summarized throughout. Direct quotations may lead to identifiable dialect associated with the individual participants, thus minimizing anonymity.

Fifteen randomly selected protestant pastors were interviewed. The interviews were unstructured according to Tim Sensing's definition in his work, *Qualitative Research*. Sensing identifies unstructured interviews as having "open-ended questions," "flexible," "exploratory," and "conversational."⁹³ The location and atmosphere were unique for each interview. Interview duration averaged between forty-five to ninety minutes with the exception of one, which length was nearly one hundred and eighty minutes. The recorded interviews are filed in a digital format on this researcher's external hard-drive for use until the project completion. The interview recordings will be stored

⁹³ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 107.

until the researcher has completed the oral defense for this project. Interview summaries are located in Appendix 4.

Interview Data

Each interview setting was unique in as far as location, privacy, disturbances and comfort. The effects of these are unknown and not measurable. Nevertheless, in the interest of thoroughness this information follows. It was however, not used in determining the results of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in December 2012 and January 2013 in Michigan's Sanilac County. Temperatures were between twenty and thirty degrees. This researcher, the interviewer, dressed professionally casual and consumed coffee during each interview. All interviews were conducted between eight a.m. and six p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Interview Location, Privacy, Disturbances, and Comfort

An interview with Pastor M was conducted at Pastor M's church in a small room that serves primarily as Pastor M's study, but functions as a nursery on Sunday mornings. Pastor M was dressed casual. The room was preheated with a small electric heater. The room was chilly but not cold. There were no interruptions during the interview. Pastor M sat in an office chair that appeared comfortable. This researcher sat in a folding chair and made every attempt to act natural and appear relaxed. A relaxed appearance according to Webster's is one who is at ease and/or casual in style.

An interview with Pastor H was conducted in Pastor H's living room. Pastor H was dressed casual. Pastor H and this researcher sat on separate sofas. This was private

setting with the presence of a young child approximately three years of age. The child was a continual distraction throughout the interview. The temperature was comfortable and both the interviewer and interviewee appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor I was conducted in Pastor I's office at the church. Pastor I was dressed casual. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The office's temperature was cold, below fifty-five degrees. A small electric heater was turned on just prior to the interview. Pastor I sat in an office chair and appeared somewhat comfortable. This researcher sat in a cushioned chair with arms and consumed coffee. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor J was conducted in Pastor J's office at the church. Pastor J was dressed casual. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The office's temperature was cold, below fifty-degrees. No heater was turned on. Pastor J sat in an office chair behind his desk. This researcher sat in a cushioned chair with arms. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor L was conducted in Pastor L's office at his home. Pastor L was dressed casual. The setting was semi-private. Pastor L's wife was present in the house. There were multiple interruptions during the interview. The office's temperature was warm. Pastor L sat in an office chair and consumed coffee. This researcher also sat in an office chair. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor O was conducted in a room in Pastor O's church. Pastor O's dress was professional. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was cold, below fifty-five degrees. The heater was

turned on upon entering the church building. Both parties sat in metal folding chairs at a folding table. Both parties appeared semi-comfortable but also appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor E was conducted in Pastor E's office at the church. Pastor E was dressed casual. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was comfortable. Pastor E and this researcher sat in folding chairs at a round table. Both parties appeared comfortable and relaxed.

An interview with Pastor C was conducted in the basement at the church. Pastor C was dressed casual. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was cold, below fifty-five degrees. The heater was turned on upon arrival at the church. Both parties sat in metal folding chairs at a folding table. Both parties appeared semi-comfortable but also appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor K was conducted in Pastor K's office at the church. Pastor K was dressed casual. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was cold, below fifty-five degrees. A small electric heater was turned on upon entering the office. Pastor K sat in an office chair. This researcher sat in a molded plastic chair. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor G was conducted in Pastor G's office at the church. Pastor G was dressed casually professional. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was comfortable. Pastor G sat behind his desk in an office chair. This researcher sat on a sofa. Both parties appeared comfortable. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor F was conducted in a little restaurant. Pastor F was dressed casual. The setting was public. There were multiple interruptions. The

interruptions consisted of a television, several people conversing, wait staff, and other such diversions that are typical of a small restaurant. The building's temperature was comfortable. Both parties were seated on black metal chairs at a center table. Both parties ordered coffee and lunch. Pastor F appeared somewhat comfortable. Neither pastor F nor this researcher were relaxed.

An interview with Pastor B was conducted in the sanctuary at Pastor B's church. Pastor B was dressed professional. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was cold, below fifty-five degrees. The heater was not turned on. Pastor B sat in a pew. This researcher sat in the same pew. Both parties appeared uncomfortable. Neither Pastor B nor this researcher appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor N was conducted in Pastor N's office at the church. Pastor N was dressed casually professional. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was comfortable. Pastor N sat in an office chair at a round table. This researcher also sat in an office chair at the same round table. Both parties appeared comfortable. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor A was conducted in the basement at Pastor A's church. Pastor A was dressed casual. The setting was private. There were no interruptions during the interview. However, the heater was quite loud. The room's temperature was cold, below fifty-five degrees. The heater was turned on upon entering the building. Pastor A and this researcher both sat on metal folding chairs at a folding table. Both parties appeared comfortable. Both parties appeared relaxed.

An interview with Pastor D was conducted in Pastor D's living room. Pastor D was dressed casually professional. The setting was private. There were minor phone

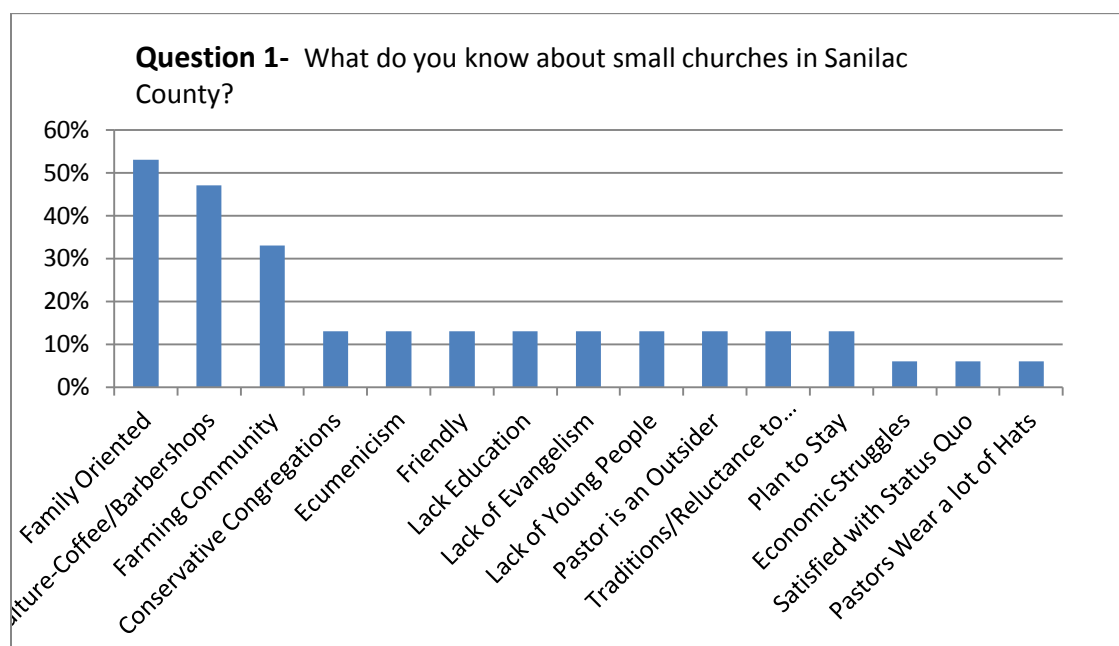
interruptions during the interview. The room's temperature was comfortable. Pastor D sat in a loud squeaky rocking chair. This researcher sat on a sofa. Both parties appeared comfortable. Both parties appeared relaxed.

Interview Questions and Answers

The data collected during interviews were ascertained from the answers to six open ended questions. The same questions were asked of each participant. They were requested to answer the questions freely and without concern for preconceived ideas pertaining to this research. The statistics are as follows.

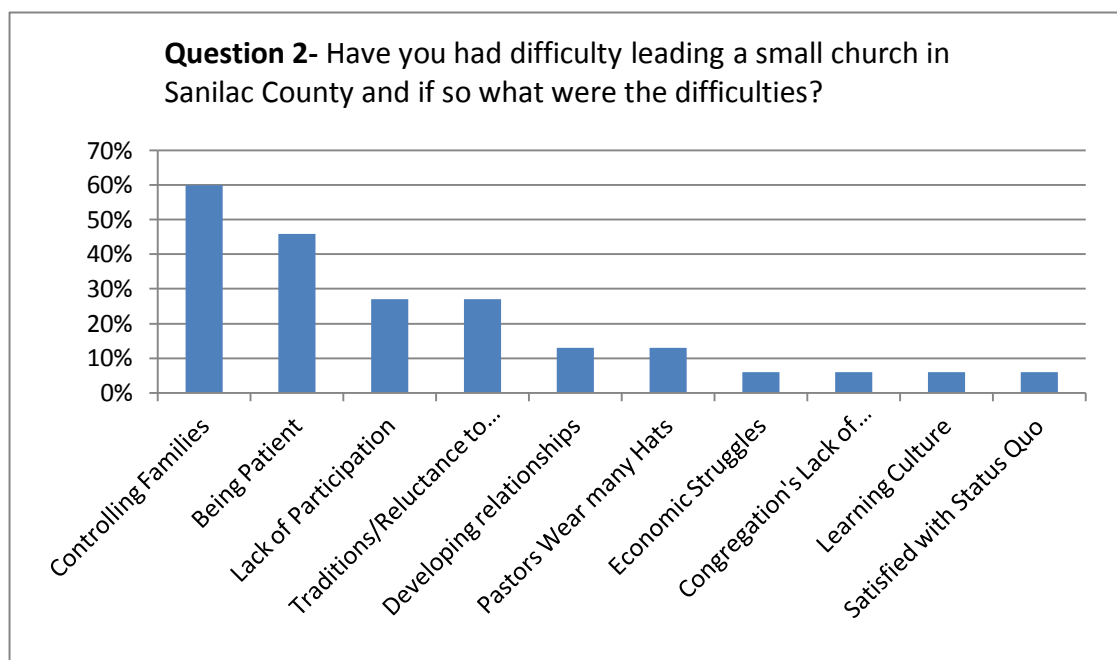
The first question asked to the participating pastors was, what do you know about small churches in Sanilac County? Six out of fifteen (40%) answered that the churches in Sanilac County had a strong family backgrounds with controlling families. Five out of fifteen (33%) answered that Sanilac County was a farming community and three out of fifteen (20%) stressed the importance of the local coffee, barber, and beauty shops. Two out fifteen (13%) mentioned other important facts such as, the pastor is an outsider, everybody is related to everybody, the congregations are conservative and ecumenism is important. Others in this category reported that churches in Sanilac County lack young people groups, evangelism and education. One out of fifteen (6%) responded to this question by giving answers such as, Sanilac County is its own little culture with economic problems, a high value on high school football games, and a satisfaction with the status quo. Some others answered that there is no quick fix to the problems within Sanilac County churches and pastors need to plan to be in Sanilac County a long time.

Churches are reluctant to change as they are grounded in their traditions and pastors in Sanilac County need to expect to perform different roles within the church.



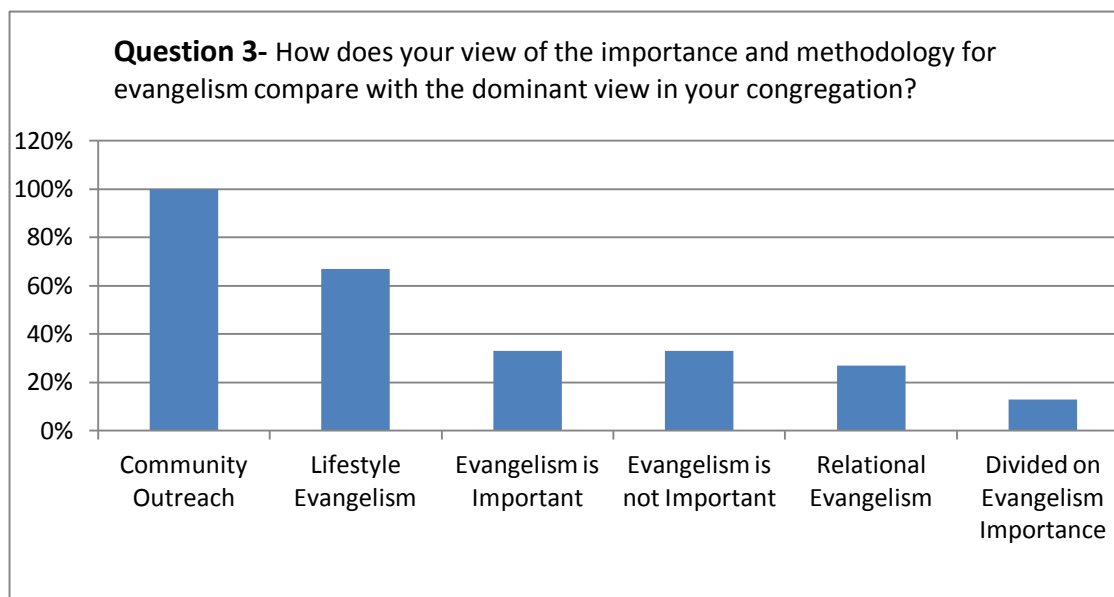
The second question asked to the participating pastors during the interview was, have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties? Nine out of fifteen (60%) pastors interviewed responded that other churches have difficulties with controlling families. They also reported however, that these same difficulties did not exist in their churches. Three out of fifteen (20%) of the pastors interviewed reported it taking a long time to gain trust and the same number reported difficulty in motivating congregants to participate. Two out of fifteen (13%) pastor expressed difficulties with traditions, unwillingness to change, and developing relationships. Others in this group reported difficulties performing the different roles expected that were outside a pastor's typical job description. One out of fifteen (6%) of the pastor interviewed described difficulties with a lack of congregational education, finances, communication, leaders, authority, and an acceptance of status quo mentality.

One out of fifteen (6%) pastors interviewed also stated that a pastor should choose battles carefully, be patient, sensitive, and learn the culture.



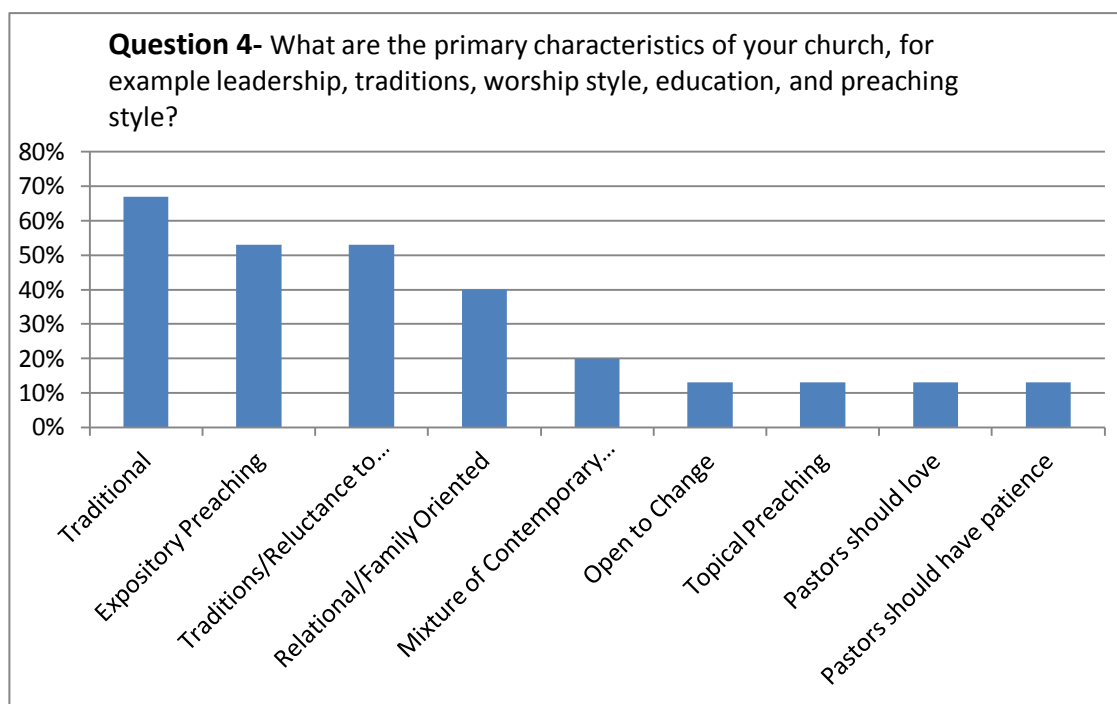
The third question asked to the participating pastors during the interview was, how does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation? Ten out of fifteen (67%) pastors interviewed stated that they believed in some form of lifestyle evangelism. While five out of fifteen (33%) stated that their churches did not view evangelism as important, five out of fifteen (33%) also stated that evangelism was important in their church. Two out of fifteen (13%) said their church was divided on the importance of evangelism. Ten out of fifteen (67%) of the pastors interviewed stated that their church used food in some capacity as an outreach tool. While Four out of fifteen (27%) expressed belief in building relationships as an evangelistic tool. Two out of fifteen (13%) of the pastors interviewed reported having other outreach activities such as concerts, going door to door, and passing out

Gospel tracts. One out of fifteen (6%) responded to this question by giving answers such as their church conduct Vacation Bible School, revivals, or they host a family oriented event. One other pastor mentioned that ecumenical activities were viewed as evangelism by his church.

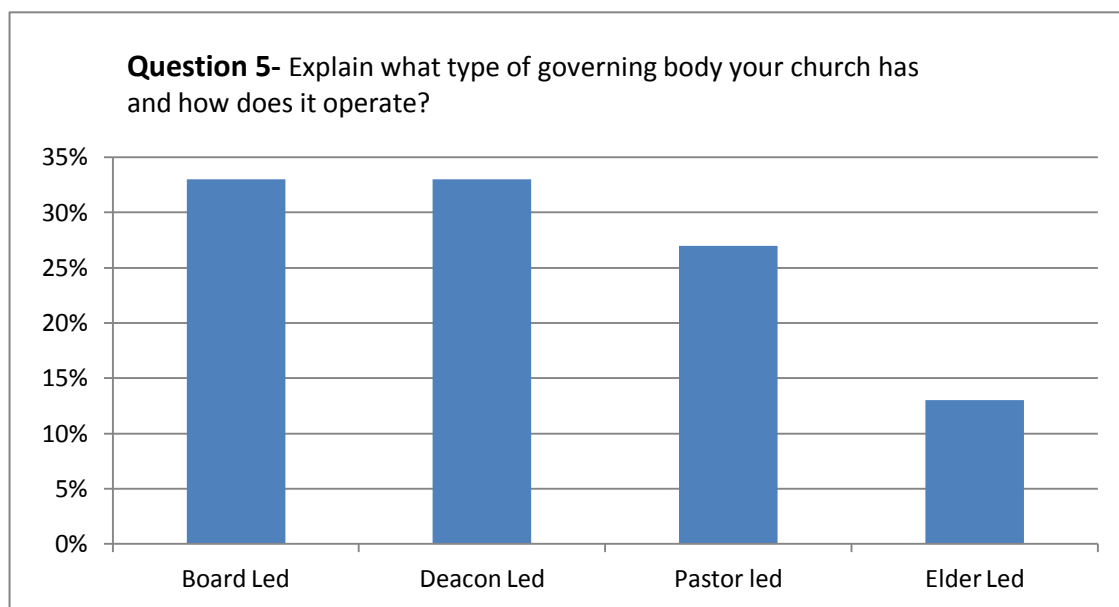


The fourth question asked to the participating pastors during the interview was, what are the primary characteristics of your church, for example leadership, traditions, worship style, education, and preaching style? Ten out of fifteen (67%) described their church as traditional in most areas. Three out of fifteen (20%) stated that their church was a mix of tradition and contemporary views. Six out of fifteen (40%) described their church as relational or family oriented. Four out of fifteen (27%) pastors interviewed reported having churches that would not change their traditions, while two out of fifteen (13%) stated that church was open to some change. Eight out of fifteen (53%) reported their preaching as expositional and two out of fifteen (13%) reported topical preaching on a regular basis. Two out of fifteen (13%) pastors interviewed expressed the importance of

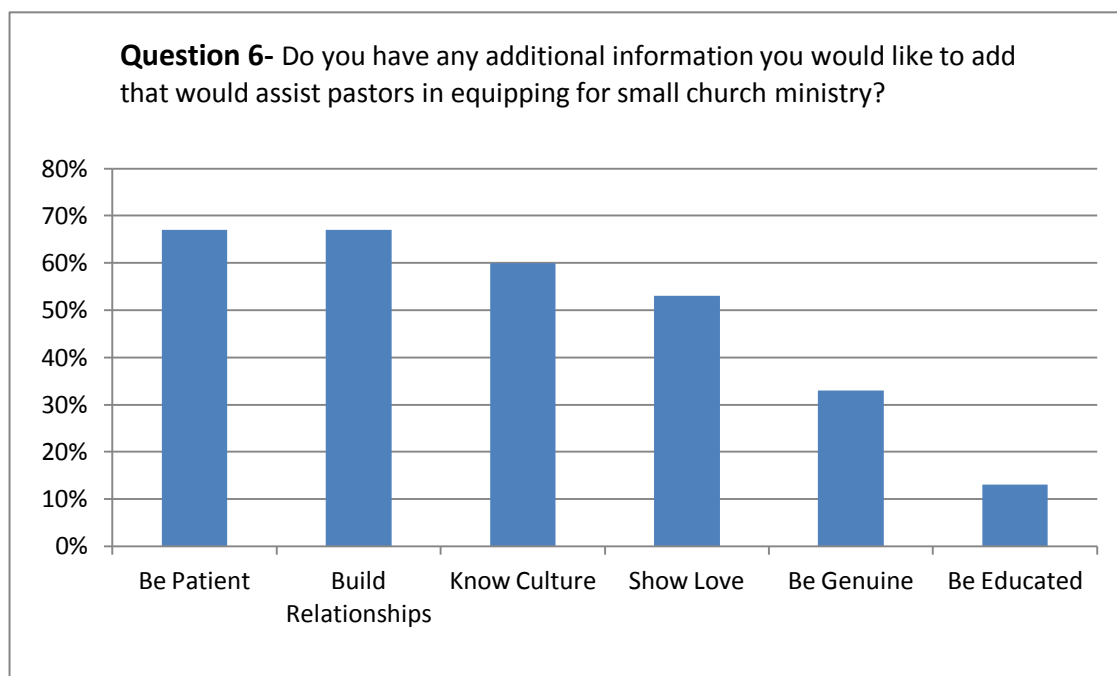
the pastor demonstrating love. Moreover, one out of fifteen (6%) pastors expressed the importance of being patient and approaching change slowly. Another pastor mentioned the importance of recognizing sacred cow traditions.



The fifth question asked to the participating pastors during the interview was, explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate? Five out of fifteen (33%) pastors interviewed reported having a board-led church. The same number reported having a deacon-led church. Three out of fifteen (2%) reported having a pastor-led church and two out of fifteen (13%) reported an elder-led church.



The sixth question asked to the participating pastors during the interview was, do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry? Nine out of fifteen (60%) of the pastors interviewed stressed the importance of building relationships. Seven out of fifteen (47%) of the pastors stressed the importance of pastors having patience. Six out of fifteen (40%) expressed the necessity for pastors to know the church's culture. Moreover, five out of fifteen (33%) stressed the importance of a pastor to show love. Three out of fifteen (20%) warned pastors to wait for change. Other pastors, one of fifteen (6%) advised pastors to be flexible, teachable, spiritual, prayerful, and preach the Bible. One of fifteen (6%) of the pastors interviewed also suggested that pastors use their gifts and visit Sanilac County's coffee shops.

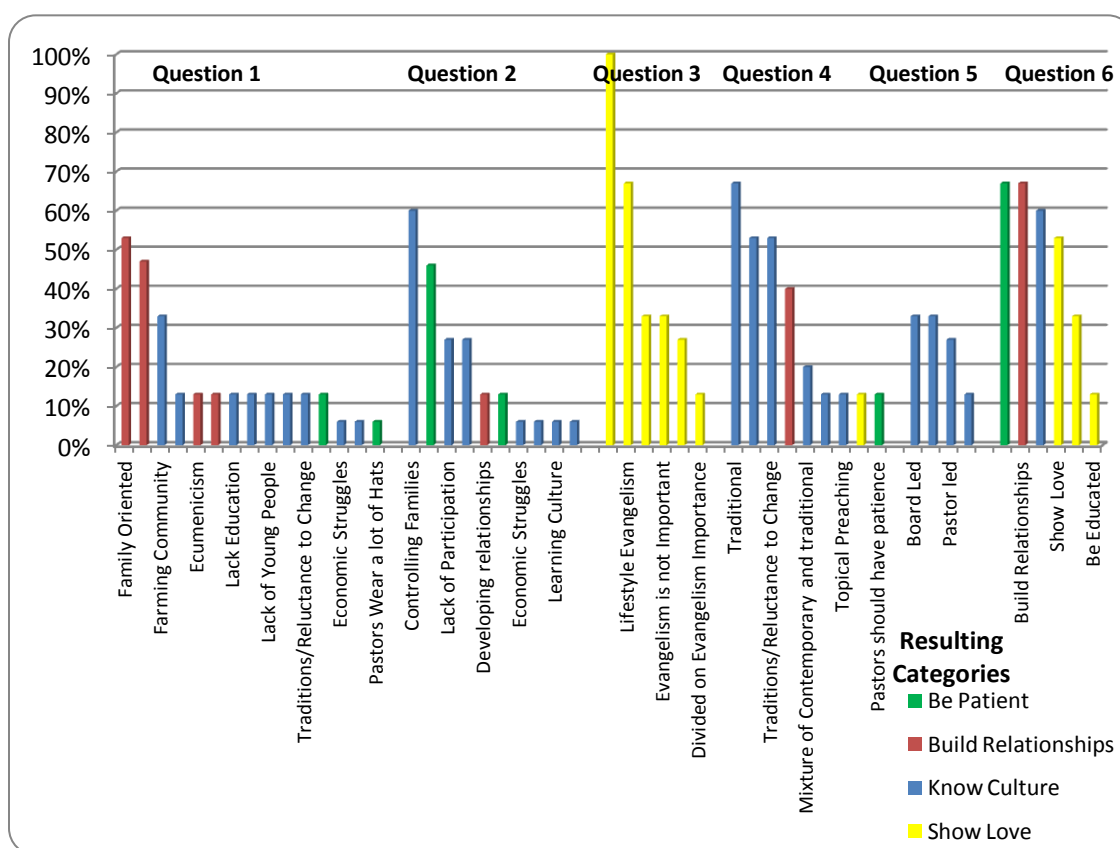


Resulting Categories

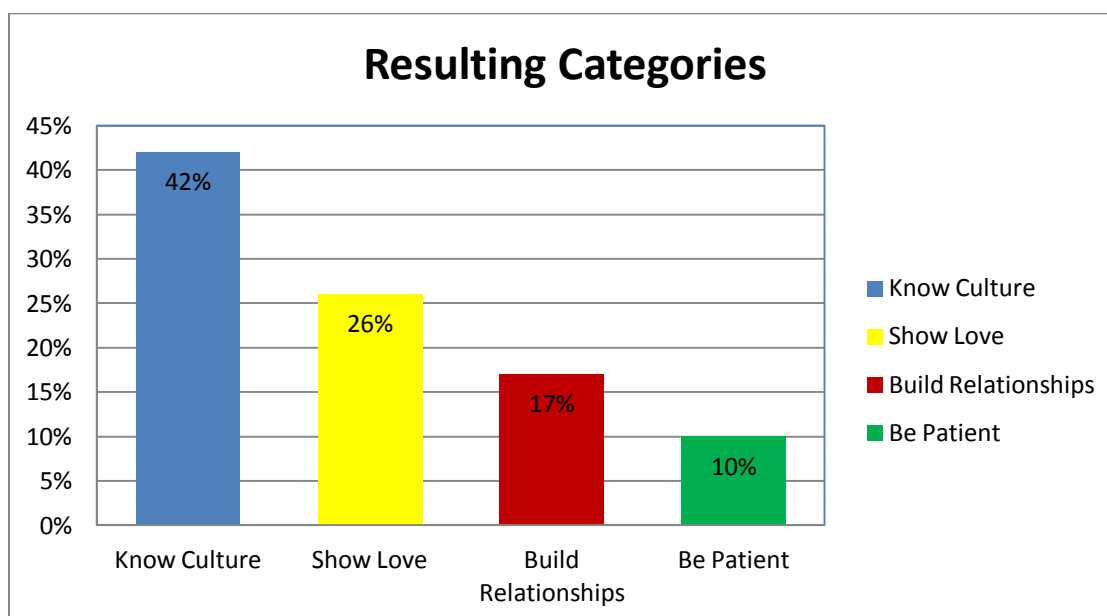
Analysis of the six questions revealed four categories from which the questions are arranged. This researcher has identified these categories as, patience, relationships, culture, and love. The categories are titled “Be Patient,” “Build Relationships,” “Know Culture,” and “Show Love.” A chart is included below that details the question grouping as they correspond to these four categories. The answer percentages were ascertained from counting the number of like responses and dividing by fifteen, the number of pastors interviewed. This process was followed for each question and the results are in the chart below.

The subsequent chart is a combination of the preceding six charts as they coordinate with the final four categories. The answers to the preceding questions were categorized. Those categories were then placed into the four concluding categories, Be

Patient, Build Relationships, Know Culture, and Show love respectively. The final categories also have corresponding colors. Each category within each question is color coded to coordinate with the color of the final four categories. For example, the first category in question one is “family oriented.” This category is colored red to indicate that it was placed in the final category of “Building Relationships.” A further example is found in question three. All of the categories created from the answers in question three relate to showing love. Therefore, they were placed in the final category titled “Show Love.” Represented in the subsequent chart are all six questions, each category for those questions, four final categories, and color coding for those final categories.



The final four resulting categories originated from the pastor's responses to question number six. Upon further study this researcher noted correlations between the answers from question number six and the answers given throughout the other five questions. Those questions were placed within a broad view of these four categories. The questions within the categories were then averaged by adding the percentage of each question and dividing by fifteen, the number of pastors interviewed. Overall, the pastors interviewed stressed knowing culture as the most important item for ministry success in Sanilac County. Therefore, forty-two percent (42%) of the answers given throughout the interviews dealt with cultural issues. The second most noted item was for pastors to show love, as twenty-six percent (26%) of the answers given throughout the interviews dealt with loving people. The third area of importance according the answers averages was building relationships. Seventeen percent (17%) of the answers given throughout the interviews dealt with building relationships. Lastly, ten percent (10%) of the answers given dealt with patience.



The researcher discovered these four categories to be vital for ministry success in Sanilac County. With the design of a workshop in view and vital categories established, this researcher began a search for literature with congruent consensus with the results of the pastor's comments as categorized into the four groups. The following section details this search and expounds this researcher's findings.

Pertinent Literature

Educational material utilizes key texts to support the data included from the interviews that is foundational for the workshop. This researcher considered many texts in the search for books that coordinated with and validated the results of the pastoral interviews. Purpose, context and readability served as evaluation factors for selecting texts for the workshop. Ammerman's work, *Studying Congregations*, was thorough, exceptional in its purpose, and content.⁹⁴ However, considering pastors in Sanilac County this text was dismissed based on readability. Two books were chosen to serve as primary texts for the workshop, Anthony Pappas' work, *Inside the Small Church* was the first selection.⁹⁵ The second chosen text was a work by Glenn Daman titled, *Shepherding the Small Church*.⁹⁶ The purpose of these books centers on the small church. The majority of the context deals with the same issues revealed through the interviews and they are readable for a variety of reading levels.

⁹⁴ Nancy Ammerman et al., eds., *Studying Congregations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

⁹⁵ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*.

⁹⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*,

It is imperative to prove the context of the text chosen for the workshop as having adequate and foundational data. For this reason, the correlating data is recorded in a chart below. This chart is in addition to discussion on the correlating material subsequent to a summary of each book. Summaries coupled with correlating material prove adequate purpose and context for each selection.

“Inside the Small Church”—Anthony G. Pappas, ed.

This book is a compilation of thirty essays on issues within the small church. Pappas has categorized these essays into four divisions, part 1, “Leading the Small Church,” part 2, “Loving the Small Church,” part 3, “Building the Capacity of the Small Church,” and part 4, “The Small Church Mission.” Each section covers important aspects of the small church; these are useful for understanding how a pastor should successfully interact with the small church congregation.⁹⁷

Part 1 includes chapters 1 through 8. These chapters begin by identifying different types of churches and congregations then progresses to identifying the characteristic necessary of a small church pastor. The next chapter deals with the authority that exists in the small church. This is important because there are different authoritative figureheads depending on the type of congregation one serves. Pastors need to understand how to manage and utilize multiple leader styles. There are two chapters featuring ways to build a healthy church and ways to move a church off a plateau. These two chapters provide lists of ten and fifteen steps to rectify the church’s problems. Following these chapters are

⁹⁷ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 1-13.

two additional chapters covering bi-vocational pastoring. These chapters offer advice to protect the bi-vocational pastor and dispel myths that harm the self-esteem of the bi-vocational pastor. Subsequent is a chapter about integrating into the community of one's church. It is difficult for a church to trust a pastor who has the mindset of a tourist.⁹⁸

Part 2 includes chapters 9 through 14. This section is about loving the small church, through boosting the self-esteem of the small church. The chapters explain some reasons for low self-esteem by the small church and some ideas to assist in raising that esteem. Some clear guidelines for raising the esteem of the small church are ministry such as community outreach, denominational gatherings, and church wide fellowship. The authors also list advantages and disadvantages of being a small church. The goal of this is to demonstrate how a church can change the disadvantages into advantages with minimal effort. A small church can also enjoy some advantages of being small. For example, members of a small church can know the entire congregation, and they can care for the needs of other church members. Loving and caring members are encouraging to the small church, which causes productivity, and creates a positive step toward being a successful pastor. Often small churches are convinced that small is not beneficial, however the last author in this section writes, "Small churches are the right size." He encourages the small church, by holding that the definition of success used by larger churches may not be appropriate for the small church.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 17-82.

⁹⁹ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 85-122.

Part 3 includes chapter 15 through 22 and covers the subject of evangelism or outreach for the small church. Churches need to increase their self-esteem, thus gaining motivation to allow new comers to become part of their ministry. Pastors have the ability to focus on the positive aspects of the small church to influence congregants to overlook the church's size and reach out to the public. Another author in this section tackles the issue of having few resources. A church that believes it has inadequate resources has not taken an inventory of the resources it does have. God will bless and provide for the church's success in his own way. There are negative and positive features to the small church and if the congregation is aware of these they will generally rally to the positives and forget about negative issues. The author of chapter 19 suggests church growth by adoption. This means that the church members adopt someone into the membership. That person does not have to earn a "right-of-passage" or do anything to be a part of the church family; the adoption is final. The next three chapters present ideas for growing one's church, where first a pastor should recognize that his small church might not want to grow. If this is true, the pastor should devise some teaching tactics. Teaching tactics might take time because there are subconscious reasons small church members chase visitors away. The author of chapter 21 believes that one should preach in a way that heals hearts and promotes acceptance. This also can be a long process. The last chapter in this section presents strategies for evangelism by the small church. He suggests, "starting new churches," "relational networking," "community center," "structural changes," and "being church for the 21st century." These suggestions when added to the previous

chapters give a complete overview of the small church as it views evangelism and its reluctance to church growth.¹⁰⁰

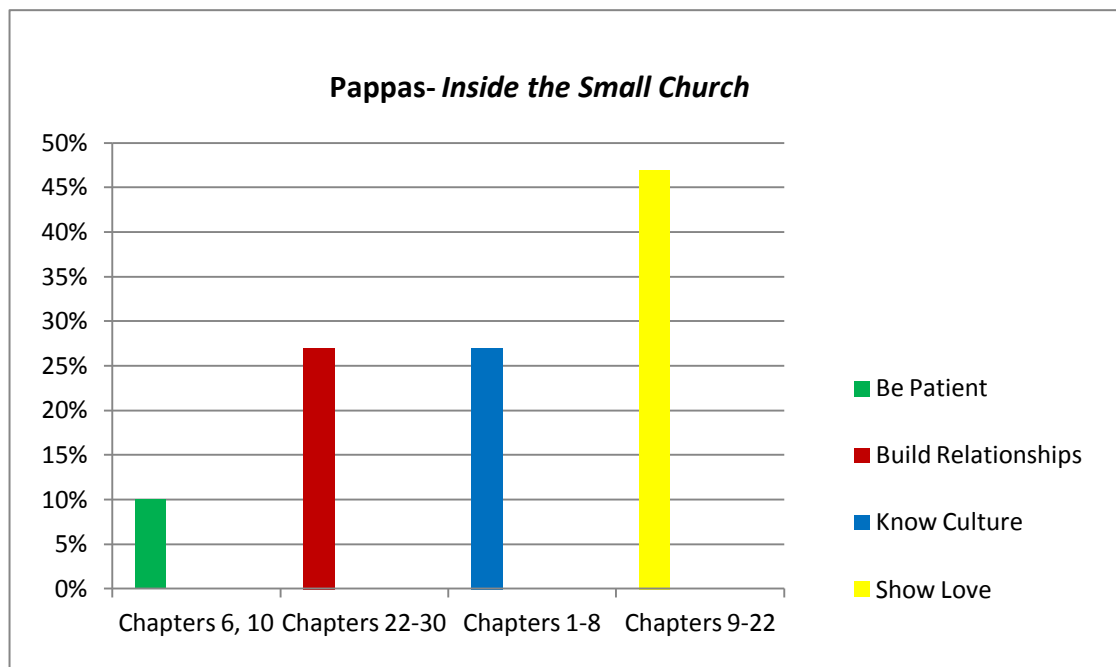
Part 4 includes chapters 23 through 30 and discusses the mission of the small church. Some have debated the importance of the small church and its measurable function. Large churches do not understand the small church as the converse is true, resulting in two factions at odds. Another issue within this section is that of ecumenism, as many small churches are separated from other denominational churches and some even from churches of like denomination. The authors believe there is lack of biblical evidence for these actions. Churches should be working together for one common cause. Church mission has changed with a community radius reduction. The authors give nine suggestions for churches who feel the need to change from the standard sixty-mile radius of influence to the new standard of thirty. The last few chapters in this book redefine the mission of the small church as one author suggests planting new churches each with a specialized focus. He suggests urban-rural churches and planting a second church in the same town. Another author suggests the small church change its mission by engaging in social ministries. Authors have their own vision of the small church mission and some small changes could be beneficial.¹⁰¹

This researcher has identified Pappas' book as containing text on culture, love, relationships, and patience. Using a broad view of these four categories, this researcher has categorized the chapters within the book. The number of chapters within each

¹⁰⁰ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 125-170.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 173-231.

category divided by the number of chapters in the book equals the percentage of the book dealing with each category. For example, twenty-seven percent (27%) of Pappas' book involves culture. Forty-seven percent (47%) involves love. Twenty-seven percent (27%) involves relationships and ten percent (10%) patience. This text meets the criteria set for use in the workshop. Therefore, it is adequate for use within the workshop.



The second chosen text was a work by Glenn Daman titled, *Shepherding the Small Church*.¹⁰² The majority of the context deals with the same issues revealed through the interviews and they are readable for a variety of reading levels. This work is also congruent with the four categories revealed from the interviews. Again, it is imperative to demonstrate the context of the text chosen for the workshop as having adequate data. For this reason, the correlating data is recorded in a chart below. This chart is in addition to

¹⁰² Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*,

discussion on the correlating material subsequent to a summary of each book. Summaries coupled with correlating material prove adequate purpose and context for each selection.

“Shepherding the Small Church”—Glenn C. Daman

Daman begins his introduction with an explanation of the issues that justify the need for the thesis. As mentioned in the introduction, Daman is concerned with identifying effectiveness within the church and he does this by first stating what effectiveness is not. There are many disjointed presuppositions concerning what an effective church looks like, and by identifying those presuppositions he narrows the field with efficiency. After dispelling many myths about church effectiveness, Daman states his view of what marks an effective church. He views an effective church as a process identified by five steps. These five steps comprise the outline of the book. The introduction gives the baseline for the discussion and serves as a map for readers who are looking for a particular development step.¹⁰³

Step one, “Understanding the Community,” consists of chapters 1 and 2.¹⁰⁴ These two chapters are foundational for church effectiveness, emphasizing the importance of understanding one’s community and one’s church. An adequate view of the community around a church gives way to meeting needs and the beginning of effectiveness for that congregation.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 11-26.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 29-64.

Beyond assessing the demographics, history, and culture within an area, the church, and its leaders must also understand who they are as a congregation. Pastors spend endless hours looking at community statistics, but fail to recognize what type of church they lead. Each church has precise characteristics that identify their purpose. It is imperative for a pastor to understand these in order to integrate into the congregation and to maximize motivational techniques. One must understand self and community to be effective.

Chapter 3 covers the theology of the church. A failing Christian worldview has caused the church to neglect the development of biblical theology. People in the pews simply do not believe doctrine is important for spiritual development. Daman views this and every part therein as essential for proper development. After defining theology, he reveals its necessity, outlined with vague detail to allow the reader a basic understanding. Knowing the doctrines of God build Christ-like character and lead to healthy relationships in the church.¹⁰⁶

“Character begins with our relationship with God.”¹⁰⁷ Part 3, “Be: Developing the Character of the Church: Loving God,” demonstrates that a Christian’s relationship to God directly influences character.¹⁰⁸ A church’s worship reflects its character. Daman outlines many elements of worship and identifies the characteristics of small church worship as unique compared to the large church. The second part of developing character

¹⁰⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 65-84.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 93.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 85.

is a central focus on prayer. Again, Daman outlines the importance of prayer and includes several suggestions for pastors and church leaders to excel in their prayer life.¹⁰⁹

“Do,” is step 4 of this five-step process toward church effectiveness, which is one of the most difficult areas for the small church is reaching their community and the world abroad.¹¹⁰ The next three chapters cover three areas of reaching out to the public with the message of Christ. The first details how to be a witnessing community, where the congregation tells the gospel with the goal of moving people toward Christ. The second area is for the church to be a teaching community, where the church moves from making converts to growing disciples in the form of teaching. Lastly, chapter 8 outlines developing servants; these people are mature enough spiritually to repeat the cycle.¹¹¹

Step five, “Envision: Developing a Vision of the Church,” outlines the necessity of a vision while supporting the importance of vision through biblical examples. After explaining vision within the small church, Daman moves to implementing the vision through communicational skills and sharing it with the proper individuals. This last chapter concludes the book all the while emphasizing theological foundations.¹¹²

This researcher has identified Daman’s book as containing text on culture, love, relationships, and patience. Using a broad view of these four categories, this researcher has categorized the chapters within the book. The number of chapters within each category divided by the number of chapters in the book equals the percentage of the book

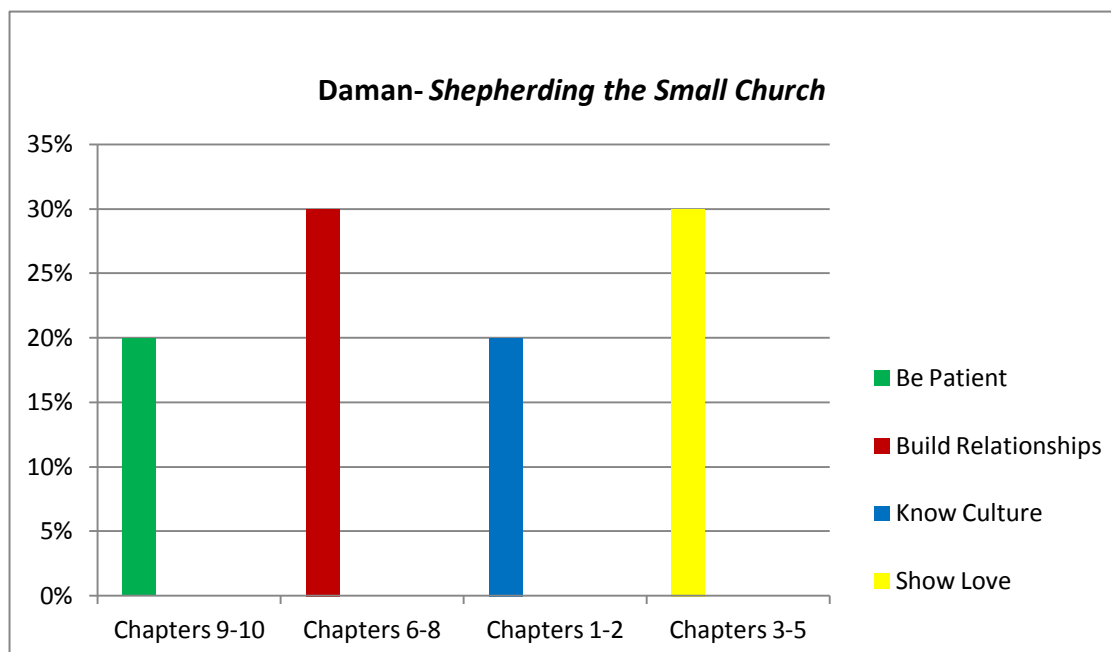
¹⁰⁹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 85-143.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 144.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 144-208.

¹¹² Ibid., 209-275.

in each category. For example, twenty percent (20%) of Daman's book involves culture. Thirty percent (30%) involves love. Thirty percent (30%) involves relationships and twenty percent (20%) patience. This text meets the criteria set for use in the workshop. Therefore, it is adequate for use within the workshop.



Two books were chosen to serve as secondary or optional texts for the workshop. Killen's work, *Pastoral Care* and another one of Daman's works titled, *Leading the Small Church* were chosen as the secondary or optional material. The contents of these books were not distributed evenly across the four categories. For example, Killen's focus was on building relationship by loving people. He excluded cultural issues and wrote very little on patience. Once again, it is imperative to prove the context of the text chosen for the workshop as having adequate data. For this reason, the correlating data is recorded in a chart below. This chart is in addition to discussion on the correlating material subsequent to a summary of each book. Summaries coupled with correlating material prove adequate purpose and context for each selection.

“Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church”—James L. Killen, Jr

The title pastoral care means, pastors caring for their congregations. This short but beneficial book takes pastors through the experiences of building a caring relational ministry for a congregation. Killen begins this book by encouraging his readers to usher people into the church, and to find people who need nurturing and meet those needs. To Killen it is important to meet the needs within one’s congregation, as people desire a relationship with their pastor and relationships are the most significant way to minister. Killen writes that extrovert behavior and the desire to meet people are necessary in learning the art of relationship building. He believes that a pastor should attend multiple events and make as many contacts as possible to build relationships. Building relationships with the leadership of one’s congregation can make accomplishing tasks easier later. “Only the pastor who has won the trust of the congregation through building good pastoral relationships will have any chance to lead the churches through the needed changes.”¹¹³

Beyond building relationship is pastoral conversation. A pastor should always know how to say things in a way that is sensitive and appropriate. Killen advocates pastoral conversation as a basic counseling technique. Pastors who build relationships will be conversing as a counselor where their primary goal should be objective conversation and listening. Getting someone to solve his or her own problems is best for any situation. Killen moves to pastoral visitation for the next few chapters.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 8-9.

¹¹⁴ Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 10-18.

Killen discusses visiting in the middle portion of this book. He relays suggestions regarding acquainting one's self with the congregation after moving to a new parish. He suggests taking some time to make "Get-acquainted visits."¹¹⁵ He also suggests visits to the shut-ins at home and in the nursing homes. These should be some of the first people visited. Visiting the sick is another type of visiting Killen discusses. He offers advice regarding the healing power of a pastoral visit. He also offers etiquette for visiting a patient in the hospital and a terminally ill patient. These situations can be challenging and emotionally draining, however the people need their pastor. The last chapter on visiting is about visiting those who are grieving. Killen again gives instructions for etiquette in comforting a grieving person. When a death in the family occurs, the family needs sympathy and empathy; the pastor should visit quickly, and display patience. Remember, grieving people take time to heal.¹¹⁶

Killen includes a chapter on funerals, one on weddings, baptisms, and one on confirmations. These chapters give insights into protocols, attitudes, and responsibilities of the pastor at these important events. Killen also returns to the subject of counseling. He suggests that many pastors may not be qualified to counsel, and therefore should refer their congregants to professional counselors when indicated. However, in the rural church this is often not an option. Killen offers several suggestions for pastors who find

¹¹⁵ Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 19.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 25-50.

themselves in the position of performing formal counseling. He suggests listening and asking God for guidance.¹¹⁷

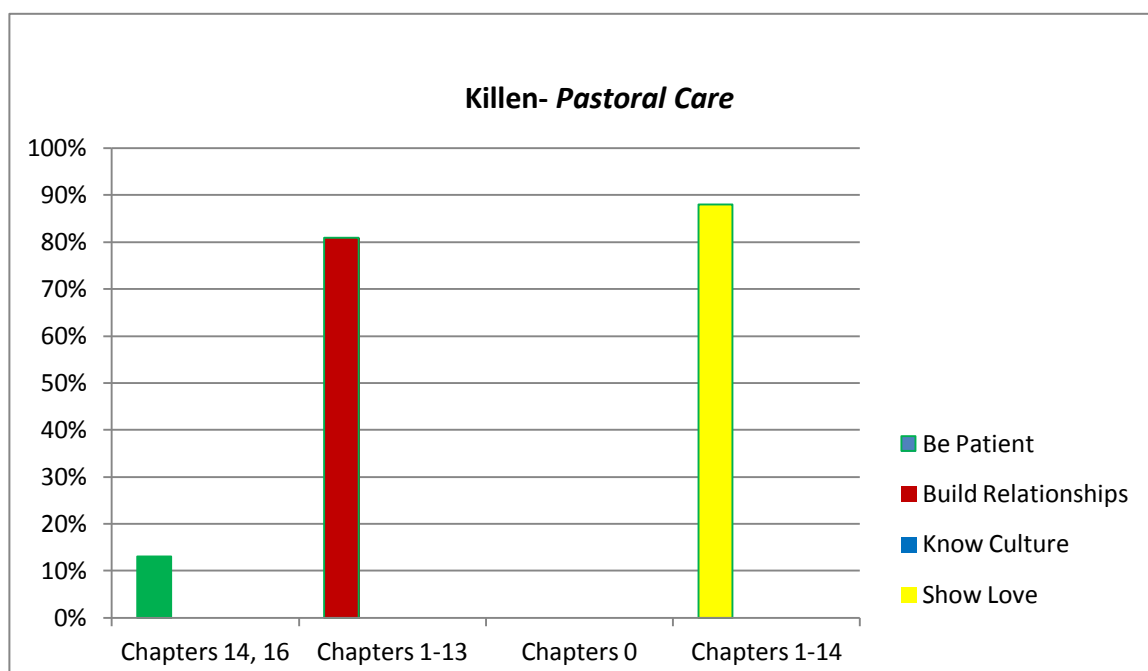
Helping with a crisis, and conflict management are two subjects that all pastors will face eventually. Congregants who lose jobs or sustain injury in a motor vehicle accident will be in need of their pastor. Killen suggests a visit to offer condolences and assess the situation. Conflict management, however, can be more complicated as parishioners struggle to agree. Lastly, the pastor needs to care for himself by providing for his needs and the needs of his family. Killen suggests sharing one's schedule with the church leadership or congregation, which assists them in understanding the busy life of their pastor and the need to take time for self and family.¹¹⁸

This researcher has identified Killen's book as containing text on love, relationships, and patience. Using a broad view of these three categories, this researcher has categorized the chapters within the book. The number of chapters within each category divided by the number of chapters in the book equals the percentage of the book dealing with each category. For example, zero percent (0%) of Killen's book involves culture. Eighty-eight percent (88%) involves love. Eighty-one percent (81%) involves relationships and thirteen percent (13%) patience. This text meets seventy-five percent (75%) of the criteria set for use in the workshop. Therefore, it is adequate for use as a secondary or optional text within the workshop.

¹¹⁷ Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 51-76.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 77-102.

Daman's work titled, *Leading the Small Church* was chosen as the other text serving as the secondary or optional material. The contents of this book were not distributed evenly across the four categories. For example, Daman focuses on relational leadership but includes little about patience. Once again, it is imperative to prove the context of the text chosen for the workshop as having adequate data. For this reason, the correlating data is recorded in a chart below. This chart is in addition to discussion on the correlating material subsequent to a summary of each book. Summaries coupled with correlating material prove adequate purpose and context for each selection.



“Leading the Small Church”—Glenn C. Daman

Many of today's pastors believe that church leadership means climbing to the top of the proverbial ladder and becoming a multi-faceted facilitator of people and programs, Daman dispels this myth in *Leading the Small Church* where he calls preachers back to a biblical understanding of leading God's people. Daman utilizes the first part of this work

to demonstrate why biblical leadership is important. He does this by documenting modern views for success and reflecting on the need for a return to shepherding God's people. Modern church leaders have caused a complex morass of ministry expectations where as simplifying ministry brings the focus on Christ and spiritual growth based on His example. Biblical leadership is necessary, as God's people, without leadership, will wander into sin confused and seeming alone. Biblical leadership is unique; the pastor does not work toward tangible goals but toward spiritual perfection in self and in others.¹¹⁹

The foundation of leadership is the first building block for Daman's "Building Effective Spiritual Leadership" model. There are three foundational principles for effective leadership; the first is the call of God. God calls leaders to do his work; he then tasks that person to a position and enables him with the necessary abilities. The second foundational principle is building godly character. Godly character stems from proper relationships with God, family, others. Having godly character also means a lack of selfish ambition, careful delineation, and vigilant in resources. The third foundational principle is spiritual reliance. Spiritual reliance begins with a solid understanding of the power of prayer. Prayer is central to ministry as praying reduces self-sufficiency and recognizes a dependence on God. Prayer empowers and sustains today's shepherds.¹²⁰

Daman's second building block for effective spiritual leadership is the purpose for leadership. "The spiritual purpose of leadership is to bring people into a personal, vibrant,

¹¹⁹ Daman, *Leading the Small Church*, 1-81.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 82-103.

real relationship with Jesus Christ,” and the “goal is to lead in a manner that brings transformation to people’s lives.”¹²¹ Pastors must understand culture to affect the personal lives of those in one’s sphere of influence. Once pastors understand the culture, becoming their shepherd assists in meeting the needs of the people. The second principle in the purpose for spiritual leadership is transforming the church. The goal is to transform the church into a loving, caring, spiritual, people dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Principle number three in the purpose for spiritual leadership focuses on transforming community. It is the church’s role to integrate culture with the goal of leading those in the surrounding community to faith in Jesus Christ. God uses pastors and their churches as pillars of moral and social issues while meeting the spiritual needs of the community.¹²²

The “Priority of Leadership” is the third building block for effective spiritual leadership. There are two priorities for effective spiritual leadership, a model and proclaiming the Word. Pastors display God in their character, as they carefully speak and display Christian values while building positive relationships and showing ultimate dependence on God. An effective leader proclaims or preaches the Word without apology while correctly relaying the truths of God’s love to all people. Preachers are to present a life changing, Bible centered, interactive, simple message of salvation.¹²³

The last building block for effective spiritual leadership is the pastor’s responsibility to shepherd the flock. The pastor, as the shepherd, has three

¹²¹ Daman, *Leading the Small Church*, 104-105.

¹²² Ibid., 104-151.

¹²³ Ibid., 152-190.

responsibilities, which are spiritual oversight, organizational administration, and equipping for ministry. Overseeing the flock encompasses issues of pastoral care such as comforting and strengthening the sheep. It also includes meeting needs by visitation and crisis management. Administrative tasks are opportunities for relationship building. Building people instead of programs is the key to administrative tasking, concentrating on the purpose of the project rather than how the goal is accomplished. The last principle in this fourth building block is the task of equipping the saints, as it centers on preparing people for ministry. Teaching the necessary tool needed to be effective ministers of the Gospel.¹²⁴

Daman focuses this final chapter on understanding small church leadership. Leadership within the small church is primarily relational, as the pastor leads families into a deeper faith and proper scriptural understanding. The family model of church dictates that the pastor is a shepherd who is relation-driven and guides the congregation through a servant leadership model.¹²⁵

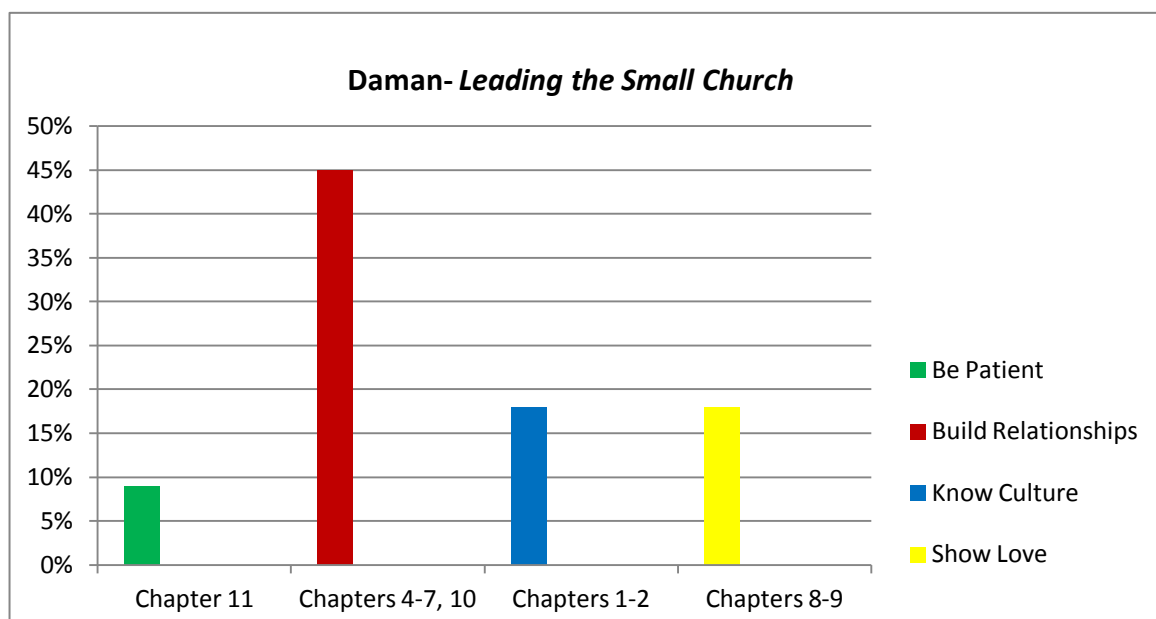
This researcher has identified Daman's book, *Leading the Small Church* as containing text on culture, love, relationships, and patience. Using a broad view of these four categories, this researcher has categorized the chapters within the book. The number of chapters within each category divided by the number of chapters in the book equals the percentage of the book dealing with each category. For example, eighteen percent (18%) of Daman's book involves culture. eighteen percent (18%) involves love. Forty-five

¹²⁴ Daman, *Leading the Small Church*, 191-211.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 212-224.

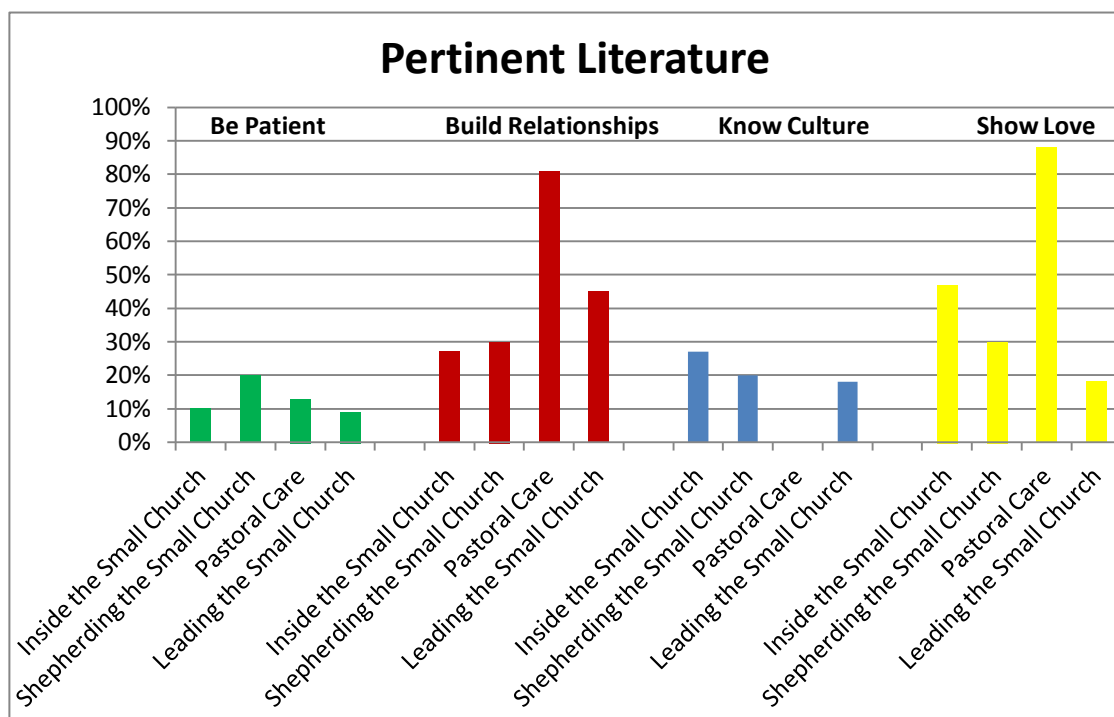
percent (45%) involves relationships and only nine percent (9%) involved patience. This text meets the criteria set for use in the workshop but includes little on patience.

Therefore, it is adequate for use as a secondary or optional text within the workshop.



These are not the only books that deal with culture, love, relationships, and patience. They are the texts best suited for the workshop when the entire criterion is considered. The interviews revealed a lack of education in Sanilac County. This not only means that the text chosen for the workshop should contain an adequate reading level for all, it also means that the workshop should be written in the same manner. The pastoral interviews determined the primary categories of the workshop. These texts coincide with those categories. The categories are valid. The material presented in the workshop will be valid according to the research. However, the workshop must also practically apply to Sanilac County Pastors. The researchers experience in the small churches of Sanilac County will assist in practical application. The researcher's experiences have no research

value and serve only as a bridge between the raw materials and the application of those materials.



Experiences for Practical Application

The majority (42%) of the pastoral interview responses pertained to culture. The answers about culture within the interviews correlate with the researcher's experiences as a native of Sanilac County. Since a large part of understanding small churches in Sanilac County is grounded in culture, it is necessary not to ignore scenarios that represent cultural examples. For this reason, the researcher has included examples within the workshop of events and situations that lend to a better understanding of Sanilac County's culture.

The researcher also has experience in serving the small churches of Sanilac County. Some of these experiences are included in the workshop as examples for better

understanding Sanilac County's small churches. The inclusion of these examples is intended to promote understanding of the primary categories within the workshop. The researcher's experience as a Sanilac County native provides an opportunity for the workshop material to be written in such a way as to reveal the true culture of the county. Pastors and church leaders moving into Sanilac County could benefit from recorded native experiences to a greater degree than materials written about Sanilac County by an outsider. Personal experience provides reality to application while promoting and bridging raw teaching materials.

Workshop Summary¹²⁶

Moving into Michigan's Sanilac County can prove to be challenging especially for a church leader. Sanilac County's unique culture cannot be anticipated and many are the common workers who quickly come and go because of that uniqueness. Church leaders are no exception. Today's Christian society all but requires formal training in the form of Bible College or seminary for those leading the church. This is a positive requirement as it maintains a semblance of protection for the church and its pulpit. Difficulty often arises, however, from the location of the higher educational institution. Most secondary schools operate in urban areas and students from rural communities adapt to city life or return home without a degree. Students adapting to the ways of the city is the basis for most difficulties for those who move into Sanilac County.

¹²⁶ Workshop is located in Appendix 6, 147.

Sanilac County is predominately rural. Although agriculture has always been a staple industry in the county, in the wake of the recession agriculture came into its own as a major financial contributor to the county. Today many jobs in Sanilac County relate directly to the agricultural and dairy industries. Lawyers stay busy with land contracts and farmland rental agreements while the grocery stores stock locally grown produce. Other stores in Sanilac County focus on supplying industry specific merchandise and setting store hours accordingly, meeting farmer's needs. With much of the county's focus on rural living, those who move into the area struggle to understand the culture, especially urbanites. Cities have abundant twenty-four hour stores and restaurants. However, most businesses in the county close by 8:00 p.m. and restaurants change ownership frequently.

The Bible College or seminary graduate knows he/she is no longer in a metropolitan area when the main form of Friday night entertainment is a high school football game that also doubles as a family reunion. The church leader who is new to Sanilac County will use precious resources in the attempt to integrate into the small church community without understanding their customs and culture. This workshop teaches four basic principles about the small church in Sanilac County, relationships, patience, love, and faithfulness. These principles correlate with each section as the student learns to 1) understand the culture by building relationships, 2) develop patience by identifying church customs, 3) loving people by adapting one's lifestyle to be 4) successful through faithfulness. The first step to integration is build relationships with local people. The following is an anthology compiled from the author's personal

experiences as a native Sanilac County church leader, pertinent literature, and interviews with various small church leaders throughout Sanilac County.

This workshop explores nuances of small churches in Michigan's Sanilac County in order to better equip current and future church leaders for successful ministries. This workshop covers the issues of primary importance within small Sanilac County churches. Special attention will be toward understanding, identifying, and adapting to the customs and cultures within the church. Because the term "pastor" is not universally applicable in the small church, for ease of understanding, "church leader(s)" is generic and includes "pastor(s)," "deacon(s)," "elder(s)," and any other(s) in "church leadership." Additionally, Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines "custom" as, "long established practice considered as unwritten law," and "culture," as "the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time."¹²⁷ Scriptures references are from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

The course objectives are: 1) The student will have a foundation for encouraging, supporting, and leading the small church; 2) The student will know better how to understand church culture through investigation and relationship building within the small church; 3) The student will be able to recognize and identify specific customs within the small church; 4) The student will learn how to adapt his or her current skill set to compliment the small church; and 5) The student will have some practical tools necessary for successfully leading the small church. These objectives are the goals of the workshop. However, there is no guarantee that the students will meet these goals. The

¹²⁷ Inc Merriam-Webster.

workshop's design is intended to provide flexibility in teaching and promote the category materials in such a way that proves interesting to the students.

The required texts for the workshop are, *Inside the Small Church* by Pappas and *Shepherding the Small church* by Daman. According to the statistical data and the observations of the researcher, these texts contain suitable material to serve as the primary text for the workshop. The secondary texts are *Pastoral Care* by Killen and *Leading the Small Church* by Daman. These secondary or additional texts contain important information concerning the workshop categories and should be considered for further study.

The workshop is designed to be taught in no less than six hours of instructional time. A suggested schedule could be to teach sections I and II on Friday between 5:00p.m., and 9:00p.m. Sections III and IV would then be taught on Saturday between 8:00a.m., and 12:00p.m. An alternate schedule could be to teach the entire class between 8:00a.m., and 5:00p.m. on a Saturday with an hour break for lunch. The workshop could also be taught in two-hour segments in a variety of configurations. The idea is for the workshop to remain flexible in order to accommodate any schedule. The course outline is subsequent.

Course Outline:

- I. How can church leaders better understand small church culture within Sanilac County?
 - A. Understand small church culture by realizing people are key.
 - B. Understand small church culture by facilitating relationships.
 - C. Understand small church culture by studying the history of the church.

- D. Understand small church culture by learning kindred relationships.
 - E. Understand small church culture by being inquisitive.
 - F. Understand small church culture by building relationships.
 - G. Understand small church culture by recognizing some general Sanilac County rules.
- II. How might church leaders identify the customs within the small church in Sanilac County?
- A. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by astute observation.
 - B. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by listening.
 - C. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County through curiosity.
 - D. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by looking in the mirror.
 - E. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by making small changes.
- III. How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?
- A. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by planning to stay for the duration.
 - B. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by being authentic and flexible.
 - C. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.
 - D. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by learning to love the people.

- E. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by discovering that “Bigger is not necessarily Better.”

IV. How can church leaders gauge success within the small church in Sanilac County?

- A. Church leaders must remain faithful to God.
- B. Church leaders must remain faithful to their families.
- C. Church leaders must remain faithful to the church.
- D. Church leaders must remain faithful to the Word.
- E. Church leaders must remain faithful in prayer.
- F. Church leaders must remain faithful to evangelism

Workshop Evaluation

Evaluation questions were drafted prior to the workshop’s design and were sent out after the workshop’s completion. Out of the fifteen pastors who were interviewed, all (100%) were supplied with the workshop, workshop Power Points, and two copies of the Workshop Evaluation form. A digital copy of the Workshop Evaluation and a typed copy with an email address and a self-addressed stamped envelope were supplied. It is unknown as to how many participating pastors reviewed the workshop. However, seven pastors, or forty-seven percent (47%) returned the evaluation forms or answered the evaluation questions during a phone conversation. The questions were answered on a five-point scale, one being the least value and five the greatest value. They were averaged using the number of evaluations completed. A chart is located below.

The first evaluation question asked to the participating pastors about the workshop was, “The material is appropriate for small church pastors?” Six out of seven (86%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number one with a five out of five (100%). One out of seven (14%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number one with a four out of five (80%). The majority of the pastors who reviewed and evaluated the workshop reported it as being appropriate for small church pastors.

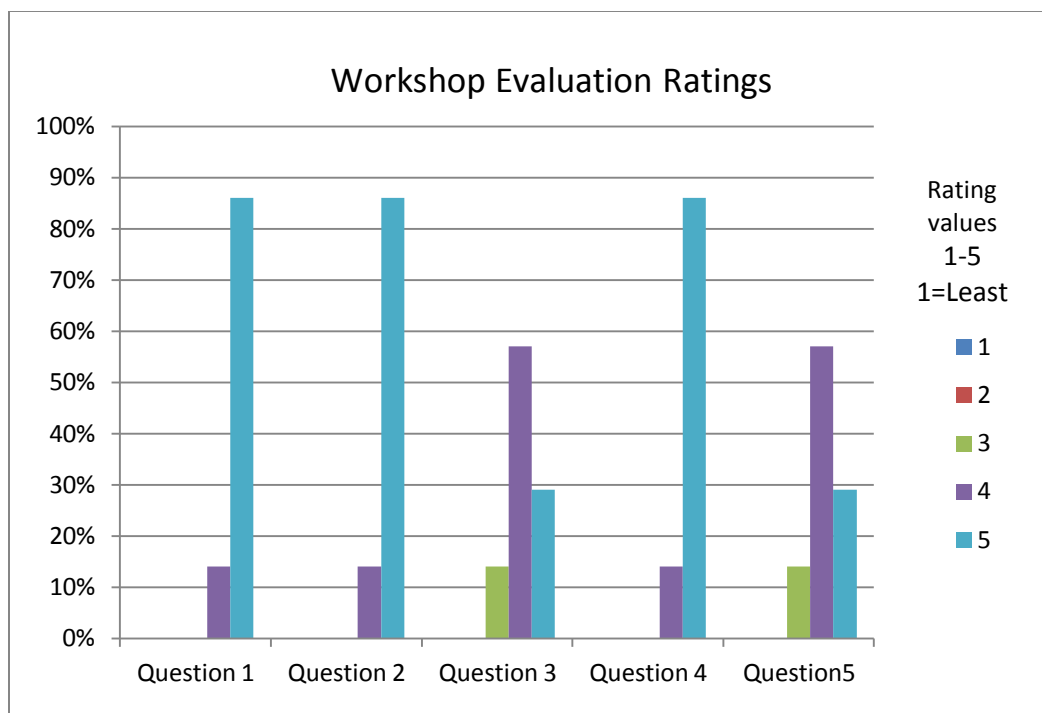
The second evaluation question asked to the participating pastors about the workshop was, “I understood the material.” Six out of seven (86%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number two with a five out of five (100%). One out of seven (14%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number two with a four out of five (80%). The majority of the pastors who reviewed and evaluated the workshop reported understanding the material.

The third evaluation question asked to the participating pastors about the workshop was, “I can easily teach the material.” Two out of seven (29%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number three with a five out of five (100%). Four out of seven (57%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number three with a four out of five (80%). Lastly, one out of seven (14%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number three with a three out of five (60%). The ratings show that the pastors who completed the evaluations can easily teach the material.

The fourth evaluation question asked to the participating pastors about the workshop was, “The material would assist pastors in understanding the small church.”

Six out of seven (86%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number four with a five out of five (100%). One out of seven (14%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number four with a four out of five (80%). The majority of the pastors who reviewed and evaluated the workshop reported that the workshop material would assist pastor in understanding the small church.

The fifth evaluation question asked to the participating pastors about the workshop was, “I feel confident that I can use this material to enhance my effectiveness as pastor.” Two out of seven (29%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number five with a five out of five (100%). Four out of seven (57%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number five with a four out of five (80%). One out of seven (14%) of the pastors who answered the evaluation rated question number five with a three out of five (60%). The ratings show that forty three percent (43%) of the pastors who reviewed and evaluated the workshop reported that they were unsure if the material would enhance their effectiveness as pastor. However, twenty-nine percent (29%) of the pastors who reviewed and evaluated the workshop reported that it could be used to enhance their effectiveness as pastor. The percentages were lower in question number five possibly due to longer tenure and minimal pastoral turnover in Sanilac County. Furthermore, theological education and mentoring is not a concern as only one out of fifteen (7%) of the church leaders have mentored an understudy and as little as three out of fifteen (20%) possess formal theological training from a Bible college or seminary.



The purpose of this project was to develop a workshop for the local church designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. Northern church pastors who serve in the small church completed the evaluations. Their responses through the evaluations revealed that the workshop is appropriate for small church pastors. The material is understandable and teachable. They also indicated that the workshop would assist pastors in understanding the small church. The accumulation of these responses indicates that the workshop could better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. According to the evaluation results, the workshop developed by the researcher for this project has met the purposes stated within the project proposal.

CHAPTER V

PROJECT SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Summary

The Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2 and Ephesians 4:11-12, clearly lays the responsibility of pastoral training on the shoulders of church leaders.¹²⁸ The purpose of this project was to develop a workshop for the local church designed to better equip pastors to serve in a small northern church setting. The goal was to provide a workshop that was usable by church leaders. Chapter 1 stated the crux of the problem and detailed the significance of the project to the researcher. Chapter 2 offered a review of literature focusing on the small church. Chapter 3 detailed the researcher's method for research. Lastly, chapter 4 is a presentation of the research performed, analysis of the research and its results, a summary of the workshop, and a summary of the evaluation of the workshop.

In answering the question, "What training can the local church offer to better equip pastors for small church ministry in Michigan's Sanilac County?" the researcher has designed a workshop that focuses on four principles about the small church in Sanilac County, relationships, patience, love, and faithfulness. These principles correlate with each section as the student learns to 1) understand the culture by building relationships,

¹²⁸ Koessler, "The Dynamics of Small-Church Ministry," 233.

2) develop patience by identifying church customs, 3) loving people by adapting one's lifestyle to be 4) successful through faithfulness. The workshop is built on the tenet of knowing culture. These categories are the product of the pastoral interviews. The data supports four of these five categories, patience, building relationships, knowing culture, and showing love. The fifth category, faithfulness, is a product of the other four categories and is the concluding chapter in the workshop.

Project Conclusion

In conclusion, the workshop was completed and presented to the pastors who were interviewed for an evaluation. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the fifteen pastors evaluated the workshop. Of those who evaluated the workshop, sixty-three percent (63%) of the evaluation questions revealed one hundred percent (100%) satisfaction with the workshop material. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the evaluation questions revealed eighty percent (80%) satisfaction rating. None of the pastors who evaluated the workshop found it inappropriate for small church pastors. The workshop represents the culture of the small church in Sanilac County as small church pastors who live and serve in Sanilac County have evaluated it and have rated the material favorably. The workshop is representative of a useful teaching tool for small church pastors. It could enhance a pastor's effectiveness within the small church in Sanilac County.

The workshop serves to meet the purpose of this project, as it has been proven to be useful in the local church. Furthermore, it can be used to better equip small church pastors for ministry. It also is suitable for small churches in a northern setting, as it includes cultural insights into a county in northeastern Michigan. The workshop is suitable for church leaders, pastors and para-church organizations. The principals behind

the workshop material are suitable for other geographical areas and have a wide range of applications.

Suggestions for Further Application

Many churches have members who feel the call to ministry. Churches could adopt and implement the ideas behind this workshop as a first step in preparing those members for ministry. This workshop should not be viewed as an alternative to a formal education. Bible colleges and seminaries are a vital part of preparing for Christian service. However, it is important to learn how to assess one's culture for successful integration, which assists in building a successful ministry.

Churches could also use the principles behind this workshop to prepare missionaries for service. It is important for missionaries to learn how to recognize and understand new cultures as they serve in foreign countries. Both short-term and long-term missionaries need to adjust to different cultures in order to be successful. Short-term missionaries need to learn how to adjust quickly to the culture in order for their trip to be successful. Mastering the techniques in this workshop could assist in integration causing a more fruitful mission trip.

Missional organizations could adopt the principles behind this workshop to assist in the teaching of lifetime missionaries. A primary task of missionaries is integration into new cultures. The principles in the workshop are universal and could be applied to any situation where integration is the goal. Some missionaries have a difficult time integrating into culture. They spend years struggling to understand and return home frustrated. This workshop can assist current missionaries in learning the tools to cultural integration.

The workshop is not limited to northern states. The principles behind the workshop can be used anywhere. It is vital however, for a native of the intended culture to provide the necessary cultural nuances. The principles of integration remain the same but learning culture can be done more quickly with native assistance. The examples within the workshop are area specific and will most likely not be applicable to other geographical areas. One who wishes to teach this workshop must use area specific examples in order to teach the material as it was intended.

The workshop is not limited to small churches. It is not intended for and probably will not work in a megachurch. However, a midsized church that holds a family orientation could benefit from the proper use of this workshop. Many southern midsized churches send young pastors and missionaries out regularly. These churches could implement this workshop and improve the effectiveness of the ministers and missionaries they are producing. The same would apply to any midsized family-oriented church.

Lastly, there is further personal application for this researcher. This researcher plans to implement this workshop with the intent of publishing a workbook. The implementation of the workshop will be evaluated in order to identify areas of improvement. The researcher could collaborate with pastors across the United States with the goal of writing area specific workshops. Collaborating with pastors in other geographical areas would remove the boundaries of the workshop. It is the desire of this researcher to encourage local churches to view pastoral cultural training as their responsibility. It is also the plan of this researcher to better equip pastors for small church ministry, as the majority of America's churches are small.

APPENDIX 1

Pastoral Interview Questions

1. What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?
2. Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?
3. How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?
4. What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?
 - Leadership
 - Traditions
 - Worship style
 - Educational style
 - Preaching Style
5. Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?
6. Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

APPENDIX 2

Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to evaluate the accompanying workshop material for a doctoral project being completed by Daniel Surbrook, a student at Temple Baptist Seminary. Please complete this questionnaire with all honesty, as your opinion is valuable to this researcher for the completion of his project. Please use the self-addressed stamped envelope provided to return this questionnaire within seven days of receipt if possible.

Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5, one being least and 5 being most.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. The material is appropriate for small church pastors? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I understood the material. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I can easily teach the material. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. The material would assist pastors in understanding the small church. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I feel confident that I can use this material to enhance my effectiveness as pastor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Title of Research Study: Commit these things to faithful men: Equipping pastors for small church ministry

Project Director: D. W. Surbrook II
2675 Ruth Rd. Applegate, MI 48401
d2surbrook@gmail.com (906)-792-9598

Purpose of the Research

This study involves researching materials aimed at assisting pastors in their understanding of the small church. Your participation is requested for the time it will take to complete a short interview.

Procedures for this Research

The researcher will investigate small church leadership, customs, and unique challenges, analyze interview responses and produce workshop material suitable for training pastors. All research will be through primary and secondary sources, no experimental research methods are to be used.

Potential Risks of Discomforts

Completing the interview could bring memories of discomfort such as, unpleasant situations and/or unpleasant feelings.

Potential Benefits to You and Others

The researcher presumes a benefit for Bible colleges, seminaries, local churches and prospective pastors, as this research is intended to improve pastoral education concerning small church culture. Beneficiaries might expect classes with improved effectiveness, which could result in less difficulty for small church pastors.

Alternative Procedures

There is no provision for alternate procedures.

Protection of Confidentiality

Your signature on this consent form signifies your permission for information you provide this study to be published in academic, theological literature, discussed for educational purposes and used generally to enhance the personal and professional development of pastors through the educational process associated with Bible colleges, seminaries and local churches. Your identification will be kept confidential. Any data you present for research will be presented as anonymous within any and all reports.

Signatures

If you agree to participate in this research project, please read the following statement:

I have been fully informed of the above-described project with its possible benefits and risks and I have given permission of participation in this study. Please sign below.

_____ Signature of Participant	_____ Name of Participant (Print)	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	_____ Name of Person Obtaining Consent (Print)	_____ Date

APPENDIX 4

Pastoral Interview Summaries

Pastor M
11/27/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor M (M):

Sanilac County has its own little culture. People are very reserved, quiet, not very expressive, and are satisfied with the status quo. In small communities everything in the church is public knowledge through the coffee shops, barber shops, and beauty shops. Visiting these places can be an interesting experience and sometimes even nerve racking. But pastor should be a part of these things in order to fit in. It seems like everyone knows everyone in a small community. People are generally accepted here and there is a feeling of family within the community. All these traditions causes difficulty for ministers. I have been the pastor in this church for six years but I have been a member for most of my life, so my situation is a little different. Ministers in Sanilac county need to plan on being here a long time there are no quick fixes. People who come in are important, Some other pastors say the people are “spiritual stunted.”

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

M:

Yes, in the five years I’ve been here I have had some difficulties with church discipline. There have also been instances of a person attending that was listed on the national sex offender list and we had to set policy to protect our children. Unwillingly to work on relationships within the body of Christ (patience understanding and forgiving). When I am faced with small difficulties like complaints, and criticisms I try not to respond right away. I step back, pray, think, reflect at least a day. Then I can approach the situation or sometimes do nothing at all. I keep a personal warm loving relationship with the one who has complained. We have traditional style worship. We have a small pool of people who are able to do anything different. Like a worship experience that isn’t a performance but not just thrown together in the last 10 minutes.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

M:

I believe in lifestyle type evangelism where people see Christ and how we act and live. I teach this, but I am not sure what the congregation's views are.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

M:

Our size church is 40-60. Age range is balanced. There is a closeness and bonding with the people in the church. We are a family church and strong families are a good foundation. For the most part our worship style is traditional. Preaching style is expository. We have deacons, elders, and committees that serve in the church. Unlike most small churches we are very fortunate not to have controlling families in our church. We do have an older church building that has not been updated. The last modification was when I was just a young child. Unfortunately, this means there is also no air conditioning. The elderly people believe that it is unnecessary. The congregation has to be unified on decisions. There is no one leader who is more influential over the rest.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

M:

We take our spiritual guidance from our elders. The elders and the pastor take the lead and authority in the church.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

M:

Go visit, it really means something when you visit. Be patient, wait on changes. Get to know the people. Show trust and love. Pray. Often time prayer time suffers but it is necessary. A church is built on prayers. A pastor should not do anything without first seeking God's wisdom (he shared a story about a family sickness that included whooping cough). God use us to affect the church but we must pray for his wisdom in that.

Pastor H
12/04/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor H (H):

I am not from Sanilac County and I am not sure about the other churches, but we are a good conservative congregation. I have noticed the people around the area gather together at coffee shops, barber shops, and restaurants.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

H:

The only difficulty that I have leading this church is even though more than sixty percent of our congregation is actively serving, there is a lack of leaders.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

H:

As a whole, the church believes evangelism is an important, urgent need. Visitation is our primary type of evangelism. Some other outreaches we participate in are dinners for the community and Project Blessing. There is a men's prayer breakfast that the church invites the community to join. After special lunches, the church will box the leftovers and give them out to those who need them. We also volunteer at Project Blessing.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

H:

The church is flexible allowing me to lead. Even though the people are opened to minor changes there are a few traditions that cannot be changed. Such as, pot luck dinners, rummage and crafts sales. Most things can be changed but not one wants to change them. My preaching style is expository. We have a traditional Sunday morning service along with Sunday School for adults, youth and children. We have an active prayer chain. The ladies do a good job. There is no better way to get the word out. It is quick. I preach

mainly expository sermons that take little time to prepare. I can't spend a lot of time in sermon preparation with all of my other responsibilities.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

H:

We have a church board that I work alongside. Our women's group is in charge of all the special events.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

H:

Make praying for your congregation a priority. Let the Lord guide and direct the church. Always be organized. Do not try to compete with previous pastors.

Pastor I
12/6/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor I (I):

Sanilac County is a farming community. The churches have strong family backgrounds that usually have controlling families. Our church people are friendly, welcome newcomers, and many of them can be seen visiting with bus drivers at McDonald's.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

I:

There were many missed opportunities. Such as, we had a large church mentality, but the majority of the church was satisfied on staying small. One difficulty I have had in the small church is that although the church has a large church mentality, they are satisfied on staying small. We do not have a patriarch or matriarch. The people also thought I was too involved with the community. For future pastors: You need to choose your battles carefully and be expected to do the little jobs in the church.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

I:

I am a friendship evangelism type person. Our church associates with other churches and the community. We participate in project blessing along with other community events. I have been accused of being involved too much in the community but pastors should know what events and actives are available. The church and I believe there is urgent need for evangelism.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

I:

We are a family feeling church. I have an informal, friendly, servant leadership style. I preach more topical than expository and sometimes the sermons are interactive. Our worship services have a mix of hymns and contemporary music.

“Always tried to leave room for the Spirit of God to surprise you.” A friend’s quote.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

I:

Our church is elder ruled and driven by an evangelical board.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

I:

Be open and teachable. Be patient for changes.

Pastor J
12/8/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor J (J):

The small church pastors in Sanilac County wear a lot of hats (He expands on all his jobs around the church).

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

J:

The only problem I have with the church is the lack of motivation from the people. People do not want to get involved with activities. However, if there is a financial need it is met. The last church I pastored, also a small church in Sanilac County, had problems with the previous pastor. I talked to him and got a different story than what the congregation told me. I was in the middle and had to straighten things out. There was nothing like that at this church.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

J:

I believe that evangelism is very important. The church and I believe in lifestyle evangelism.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

J:

Our church has deacons. I am an expository preacher. Our worship service is traditional with some contemporary songs. The only tradition that we hold is Communion. I can always tell who is missing from attendance because they always sit in the same seats. That is a little traditional but not a problem.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

J:

Our governing body is governed by the pastor and deacons.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

J:

A new pastor needs to be flexible, willing to do what needs to be done in the church, and be patient with the people. They are good, hard working people who lack a full knowledge of the scriptures.

Pastor L
12/10/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor L (L):

The people are agricultural. The churches are family oriented and are involved in hunting and fishing guns are big in this county. The number of congregants goes down in the summer because of the farming and in the winter, the snow birds leave. During the year we have a winter soup and salad community meal, and in autumn annual pigs roast for the community. We host meals for the community throughout the year. Our church is made up of matriarchs and patriarchs who have been reluctant to change. However, I believe they are now open to change.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

L:

I have had no problems at all. The congregation wanted someone to tell them what to do.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

L:

I don't bring people to Christ; I can only plant a seed. The congregation supports this view. We are a welcoming church that offer outreach programs. We provide monthly dinners served for the community, host a relationship building men's "New Years" prime rib dinner, and we participate in Project Blessing. I also teach pistol safety classes. I consider this outreach

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

L:

I am not a dictator. I can make the decisions in the church, but I have suggested changing a few minor things since I have been here. Such as, the order of announcements, lighting of candles, a specific song to be played and sung during this time, and a children's

moment during the service. We use the hymnals because people are familiar with them. People tend to get frustrated with new things so we keep it simple.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

L:

We have a 'ministry to counsel' which votes on everything. Whenever there is a need I suggest things and they make a motion. I can make changes but out of respect I ask for permission.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

L:

Wait to make changes, and build relationships in the church, allow the people to use their gifts and talents, and don't be afraid to try new things.

Pastor O
12/10/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor O (O):

We are a church that fellowships with other Baptist churches who have similar doctrine. We are separatists. The country church people are family oriented, rooted to agriculture, and less educated than the city church people. My wife is from Sanilac County, I am not.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

O:

Yes, there were some problems. The lack of the congregation's education was difficult at first. Because I was from the city it took some time for the people to adjust to my preaching style. I had to make some changes by rephrasing my preaching so they could understand. I had to be patient, sensitive, develop relationships with the people, and learn their culture in order to gain their respect. Despite my pastor friends' warnings, I went to pastor a church while the retired pastor was still a member. There were no problems with him being there.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

O:

I believe there is an urgency to reach everyone according to the Great Commission. In order for there to be a strong, long lasting outreach, it needs to be family oriented. Our church go door-to-door handing out bags with Gospel tracks. However, there is lack of participation for this outreach. We are not program driven we do not focus on numbers.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

O:

This is a pastor led church. Our worship service is traditional. We have a projector but do not use it for music, we are partial to the hymnals. We do not allow electric guitars, drums or music with an offbeat. We are Separatist and a strong family church. Some

traditions that will not be changed are our worship style, the use of the King James Bible, and women must wear a dress or skirt when giving specials. Other things can be changed.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

O:

We have deacons, but I am the leader in all decision making. There is a balance between pastor leading and congregation. I am the leader in all decision making. If there is a conflict with a decision, I will take it before the church.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

O:

You need to be patient, spiritually minded, move your ministry to build strong men, need to know that Sanilac County is a farming community, learn about Sanilac County, and build relationships.

Pastor E
12/11/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor E (E):

The pastors in the area have fellowship time together for The National Day of prayer, right to life, and welcoming new pastors in the area. This is relatively new since I have been here. I am not from Sanilac County. Community events such as See You at the Pole and the community Easter service brings churches and community together. Small churches are authentic they know how to worship and don't just go through the motions like some bigger churches. There is a lack of young people groups.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

E:

I have difficulty in motivating people, especially men, to use their gifts and serve in the church. I do have some influential people in the church, but I feel it is not a problem.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

E:

I believe evangelism is not as urgent as it should be. As a church family we have not reached out as much as we should. However, we do have family nights where people are encouraged to bring friends and family for food and games.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

E:

We have good relationships with each other. We are a friendly church that welcomes newcomers. We offer Kids club, Sunday school, Sunday morning/evening service, and Wednesday night. These are traditions that the church will resist to change. I need to be careful not to kill 'Sacred Cows'. Worship style is traditional with a blend of classical praise songs. We use projectors, guitars, flutes, trumpets, a piano and an organ in our worship time. New comers are always welcomed.

A new pastor should not make a lot of changes, needs to form relationships, and love the people. An important part of our church is our annual meeting to set the next year's calendar. The preaching style is Biblical exegetical and sometimes topical. I also include the occasional farming or hunting illustration to keep people interested. Worship style is traditional with a blend of classical praise songs. We use two projectors but the hymnals are also in the pews just in case someone prefers it over the projector. A new pastor should not make many changes, needs to form relationships, and love the people. A new pastor should also look for sacred cows. These can be found in various places around the church.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

E:

The church is deacon ran. I give my input but do not get to vote. I am subordinate to the board.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

E:

Be consistent. A new pastor has to have a love for people, have a plan to reach the impossible, and get to know the community. Make sure your talk matches your walk and be faithful to the word.

Pastor C
12/14/2012

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor C (C):

We have 50-60 in our congregation. When I moved to Sanilac County, it took me sometime to understand this farming community. Some of the things I learned were the excitement over rival football towns and that people here would drive a long distance to the football games and work, but not to church. It took a lot to fit in and understand the families in this community. Some families are tight and others do not even speak to each other. It took a lot of questions to find out how things worked. Adapting to the local farming and seasonal schedules are an important part of understanding the people here. I don't do the maintenance on the church. I am not mechanical but we have a couple of men that take care of things. Another thing I have noticed is that the churches here are struggling with getting young people.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

C:

When I first arrived my opinion did not matter. So I tried to get to know the people to explain how I do things. There were difficulties in the concert specials we hosted. It took me five years to gain the trust of the people. I have been here for 10 years and I still do not have the authority to tell the people what to do. I started meeting with each person to ask my role in the church and they did not respond. There is a controlling family in the church. I have looked to the men for leadership. There are local theologians in the church. New pastors need to support missionaries that grew up around the area. There were many angry people in the church that were angry at the previous pastor. I needed to get the people to let go of the grudge. They welcomed me but I had no authority. I had fresh new ideas and thought I could change things or make a difference. My approach is relational, however lots of pastors use the small church as a way to get into a bigger church. People are stuck in their ways. They always park in the same spots and sit in the same places. When these things are interrupted, there is difficulty.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

C:

I believe in lifestyle evangelism. The Christian walk is what I do for others to see Christ. We host concerts in the Forester Park and I present the gospel. A couple of times a month we have a soup and sandwich meal for the community. The view is "Let's love our neighbor." The church does not always understand its purpose and if a churches purpose

does not match what they pastors thinks the purpose is evangelism can suffer. The majority in the church has not participated and believes there is no urgency in evangelism.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

C:

I preach mostly expository. It is important to spend time preparing for sermons. We want to give our best. Our worship style is traditional with some contemporary. One of our traditions that cannot be changed is a time during the service that allows the people to walk around shaking hands and greeting each other. We call this "Greet Your Neighbor."

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

C:

We have a board of deacons. All major decisions are made by the congregation.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

C:

Be patient, be active in the community, and devote yourself to youth.

Pastor K
1/9/2013

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor K (K):

The small church is more intimate, friendly, and welcoming to others.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

K:

I have had difficulty dealing with the personal issues in the people's lives. Also, there were problems with families who were controlling the church.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

K:

My view is to equip the people to evangelize. The church is divided on agreeing with me. We have a number of outreach programs. Worship bands in the park, we handout literature, and we host community food give-a-ways alongside other churches in the area. Our church does not believe there is an urgent need for evangelism.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

K:

We are a loving church who reaches out to the struggling, neglected, and the misfits. Our worship service is contemporary with a Spirit led preaching style. We use the projector for our music not hymnals and let the Spirit lead. Our church building is an old roller rink and we are just regular people trying to please God. We do not have traditions and are open to what God has for us.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

K:

We are a pastor led church. I cannot be voted out.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

K:

Invest in people, make sacrifices in your life, and be involved in the community.

Pastor G
1/9/2013

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor G (G):

Churches are struggling with the economy because of the lack of jobs. There is a weakness of character. People do not read their Bibles, and are looking for carnal needs rather than spiritual needs. It is important to know everyone in your congregation and using the church directory is a good way to do that if your church has one. Look at giving, attendance, over all attitudes in order to know your church.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

G:

There has not been immediate growth because of some misguided information about our church. There has also been a difficulty with families who have grown up in the church and hold onto tradition. They did not like change and it took me three years to make minor changes. This was also reflected by how long the previous pastors were here. There have been problems of this sort for years.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

G:

I believe in lifestyle evangelism. The majority of the congregation follows but some are more reserved. We offer some outreach activities throughout the year. Some of our outreach programs are, VBS followed by a family night, a one week Revival once a year, individual phone calls and visiting, a three day Mission conference, and a Children's Christmas program. I believe there is urgency for evangelism now because of the political changes.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

G:

Our church is pastor and deacon led. We have a traditional conservative worship service with hymns and string instruments. We have a projector but do not use it for purposes of displaying music. My preaching style is expositional and sometimes topical. We are a self-supporting church. The congregation pays for everything and we do not do fundraisers. A new pastor needs to watch for churches that say, will you adopt our vision. A new pastor has to overcome his youth, gain people's respect, and he has to have the people want to follow. When someone tells you not to visit go visit them anyway. (pastor tells a story about not visiting someone).

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

G:

The deacons give spiritual guidance. The leadership comes from me. The deacons and I have the authority to make the decisions of the church. I do what is needed to maintain the church.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

G:

A new pastor needs to have both seminary and hands on education. The pastor should develop relationships, always have a listening ear, show humility, and be genuine.

Pastor F
1/10/2013

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor F (F):

Sanilac County consists of patriarch and matriarch churches that hold onto traditions. It is a family oriented uneducated community. It is very important for a new pastor to not change anything until they know the dynamic of the church. It is important for a pastor to fit in. In Sanilac County, everybody knows everybody and everybody is related in some way. They do not like city mentality. People do not put on in Sanilac County. They tell it like it is and prefer for their pastor to have a beer once in a while. Pastors should visit the coffee shops in the morning. They are beer stores after six p.m. One place I visited the man was drinking Highlife, smoking a cigar while shooting rabbits with his pistol. Definitely, do not judge people in Sanilac County. There are not highly educated people in Sanilac County.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

F:

People like their traditions. The Minden City United Methodist church was soon going to close down. It took a year to get it back up and running. In Deckerville, the people did not want to change, but after some time the people understood that it was necessary and within the last three years we have made several changes including a couple of additions.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

F:

We are a lifestyle evangelistic church. We show Jesus through how we live in the community from the movie theater to the 4-H fair we are examples of Christ. People view the inside of the church by what is said about the church on the outside. Evangelism in when you have happy people in one accord. It's not about programs.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

F:

The church is church board led. Our worship style is contemporary. We do not use the hymnals since we got the projectors for our music. I am a brimstone and fire preacher. We have no traditions. The pulpit is only there to put my water on. No one would have a problem if we got rid of it. I pray in Hebrew over the communion because Jesus, Paul, and others prayed in Hebrew.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

F:

I have a council who makes decisions. The trustees make the decisions concerning the property. I don't have a vote but I have an opinion.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

F:

The new pastor needs to visit every coffee shop in the county just know they are going to talk about you when you leave. The coffee shop rules are different for women than men. Sanilac County wants a pastor to get to know them and who will drink a beer with them. Be real, and get to know the atmosphere. Observe the church and the community.

Pastor B
1/10/2013

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor B (B):

I don't know much about the churches. I think people are looking for a down to earth pastor. I believe the church needs to support their pastor. There is division between churches. I am a Separatist, but I don't bash any other church or pastor.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

B:

I had some people come in and try to teach something that I do not believe. I do all the maintenance because there is no one else who will do it. There were problems at my other church because my granddaughter was molested and that pretty much split the congregation. I let people know how I felt about the entire situation. Sometimes it is better to keep things to yourself.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

B:

I practice lifestyle evangelism. I use to try to persuade people to Christ. I used to go door-to-door, now pray to be in the right place at the right time. I put out flyers. I look for opportunity to leave tracks. Soul winning is an everyday thing. The church has the same view. We have community dinners, so I put out flyers to invite the community.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

B:

I am the soul leader in the church. Worship style is a mix of traditional and contemporary. My preaching style is expository and topical. We are a King James only church.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

B:

The church is pastor led. We have no deacon board. I make the decisions. I would like a reviser board because a pastor should consult the men in decisions.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

B:

Don't change things right away, be friendly, make yourself available, get to know, and love your people. Love them and try to fit in as much as possible.

Pastor N
1/10/2013

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor N (N):

Sanilac County is a farming community where “everybody is related to everybody”. I came from the Detroit area and a new pastor to this area will be an outsider. There are many powerful people in Sanilac County. They do not really care about how others do things, it’s a self-centered mentality. Two things about Sanilac County, you cannot compare it to any other place and you cannot judge the people that live here.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

N:

The church was financially broken. However, that was poor financial management. I noticed it and corrected the problem. This is something to notice in a new church and it is better to know who is struggling so the church can help or at least pray. Now the people will meet the financial needs of the church but they do not typically give a set amount like 10%. Another difficulty is the lack of the people letting me know what is going on. Visitation was a challenge until I learned about the people’s jobs and schedules. It is important to put a name with a face and learn as much as possible about each person. The pastor does a lot in a small Sanilac County church. He gives advice, counsels and mediates all types of conflict. This can be difficult at times and can tell of possible future difficulties.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

N:

We practice lifestyle evangelism. I believe there is no urgency in evangelism. Our congregation is mission minded and welcomes anyone.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

N:

We have a strong church board. Worship style is conservative and liturgical. Politically I need to go to the board. Administrative I can just do it, but I go to the board. My preaching style is lectionary.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

N:

We have a church counsel, administrative board, committees, and lay leaders who make decisions.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

N:

Love the people, listen to the people, know enough that you don't know enough, find someone outside the congregation to talk with, and be yourself.

Pastor A
1/11/2013

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor A (A):

There is structure in the churches and they are run by families. The churches are not interested in missions outside Sanilac County. Most business meetings take place before and after business meetings. It is a good idea to have notes with you during these unscheduled meetings.

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

A:

I have never had any difficulties. There was a small problem when I decided not to attend the Tuesday and Thursday meeting. My son was in a playoff game. My view is God first, family next and then church. A pastor needs to learn to say no.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

A:

Evangelism is our lifeblood. We have no outreach program. I believe in lifestyle evangelism and the church follows. We believe there is no urgency. We do have spaghetti dinners for the public along with our annual strawberry social. No one would want to change either of these things. However, they are open to new things, but have not changed anything in years.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

A:

(Carsonville) There is no board, there are no traditions, and our worship style is traditional. (McGregor) Everything is run by one board. The traditions include our monthly Communion. Our worship style is traditional with expository and lectionary preaching. The congregation in McGregor expects illustrations that hit home. They also

expect you to sound and act like they do. When you begin to fit in these ways they feel comfortable and treat you like family.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

A:

They don't grasp conference mentality.

Int:

Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

A:

A new pastor should let the people have the idea, preach the Bible, and be a friend.

Pastor D
1/11/1213

Interviewer (Int):

What do you know about small churches in Sanilac County?

Pastor D (D):

A new pastor has to get enough people to follow him. He has to make a living on his own. Don't neglect your family or your children will dislike the church (He goes on to tell about his family in the big picture on the wall).

Int:

Have you had difficulty leading a small church in Sanilac County and if so what were the difficulties?

D:

Some people in the church have left the county and went somewhere else to find jobs.

Int:

How does your view of the importance and methodology for evangelism compare with the dominant view in your congregation?

D:

I am working for the Kingdom of God. I visit the nursing homes and read to the people there. Some people want me to visit them at their homes. I visit because I want to not because I have to. I do not waste my time with people who do not want to listen.

Int:

What are the primary characteristics of your church, for example?

- Leadership
- Traditions
- Worship style
- Educational style
- Preaching style

D:

We were a Full Gospel church. Our worship style was traditional. Some of the traditions we had were Communion with individual families and the use of the Altar.

Int:

Explain what type of governing body your church has and how does it operate?

D:

We had a board. They had me do whatever was needed.

Int:

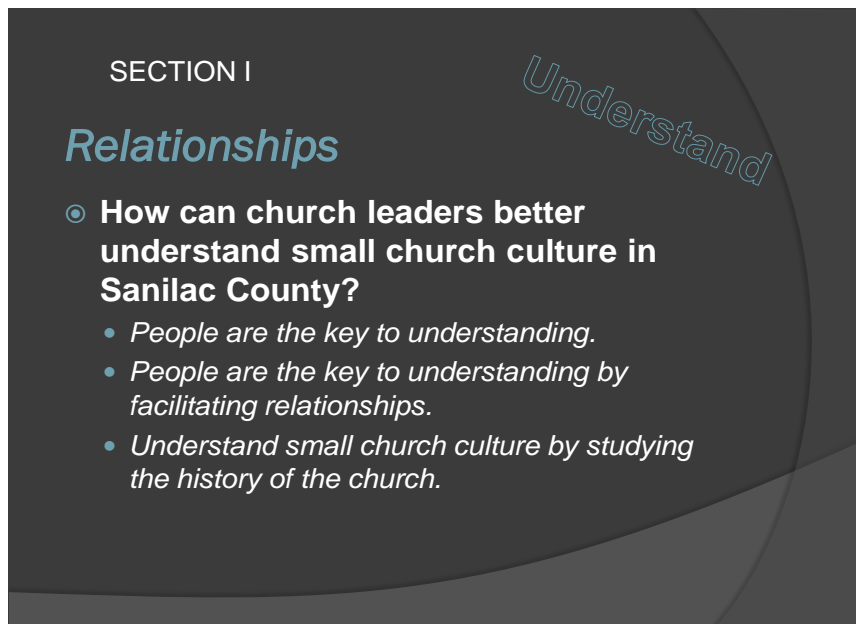
Do you have any additional information you would like to add that would assist pastors in equipping for small church ministry?

D:

Maintain Separation of Church and State, be sure to get back to the Altar, get involved with Christian education, and get back to revival.

APPENDIX 5

PowerPoint Slides



SECTION I

Relationships

Understand

- **How can church leaders better understand small church culture in Sanilac County?**
 - *Understand small church culture by learning kindred relationships.*
 - *Understand small church culture by being inquisitive.*

SECTION I

Relationships

Understand

- **How can church leaders better understand small church culture in Sanilac County?**
 - *Understand small church culture by building relationships.*
 - *General Sanilac County rules on culture.*

SECTION II

Identify

Patience

- **How might church leaders identify the customs within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by astute observation.*
 - *Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by listening.*

SECTION II

Identify

Patience

- **How might church leaders identify the customs within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Identify small church customs in Sanilac County through curiosity.*
 - *Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by looking in the mirror.*

SECTION II

*Patience**Identify*

- **How might church leaders identify the customs within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by making small changes.*

SECTION III

*Love**Adapt*

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by planning to stay for the duration.*
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by being authentic and flexible.*

SECTION III

Love

Adapt

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.*
 - Character 1: The small church is relationally driven.
 - Characteristic 2: The small church works through informal channels
 - Characteristic 3: The small church works as a whole.

SECTION III

Love

Adapt

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.*
 - Characteristic 4: Power and authority reside in the laity rather than the church leader.
 - Characteristic 5: The small church relates as a family.
 - Characteristic 6: Communication occurs through the grape vine.

SECTION III

Love

Adapt

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.*
 - Characteristic 7: Traditions and heritage undergird the structure, ministry, and culture.
 - Characteristic 8: The church functions and worships intergenerationally.
 - Characteristic 9: The focus is upon people rather than performance.

SECTION III

Love

Adapt

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.*
 - Characteristic 10: There is a place for everyone and everyone has a place.
 - Characteristic 11: The small church values relatives.
 - Characteristic 12: The small church values generalists.

SECTION III

Love

Adapt

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.*
 - Characteristic 13: The small church has its own calendar and timetable.
 - Characteristic 14: In the small church, people give.

--Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*

SECTION III

Love

Adapt

- **How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?**
 - Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by learning to love the people.
 - *Church leaders and church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by discovering that "Bigger is not Better."*

SECTION IV

Success

Faithfulness

- How can church leaders and gauge their success within the small church in Sanilac County?
 - Church leaders must remain faithful to God
 - *Church leaders must remain faithful to their families.*

SECTION IV

Success

Faithfulness

- How can church leaders and gauge their success within the small church in Sanilac County?
 - Church leaders must remain faithful to the church.
 - *Church leaders must remain faithful to the Word.*

SECTION IV

Success

Faithfulness

- How can church leaders and gauge their success within the small church in Sanilac County?
 - Church leaders must remain faithful in prayer.
 - Church leaders must remain faithful to evangelism.

SECTION IV

Success

Faithfulness

- How can church leaders and gauge their success within the small church in Sanilac County?
 - *Never look at the empty pews.*
 - *“I [Paul] planted, Appollos watered and God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6).*

Commit these things to Faithful men

- ◉ Relationships
- ◉ Patience
- ◉ Love
- ◉ Faithfulness
- ◉ Understand Culture
- ◉ Identify Customs
- ◉ Adapt one's lifestyle
- ◉ Success for a lifetime

*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses,
commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
—2 Timothy 2:2*

APPENDIX 6

WORKSHOP

COMMIT THESE THINGS TO FAITHFUL MEN:
EQUIPPING PASTORS FOR SMALL CHURCH MINISTRY

BY DANIEL W SURBROOK II

Commit These Things to Faithful Men

Course Description:

This workshop explores nuances of small churches in Michigan's Sanilac County in order to better equip current and future church leaders for successful ministries. This workshop covers the issues of primary importance within small Sanilac County churches. Special attention will be toward understanding, identifying, and adapting to the customs and cultures within the church. Because the term "pastor" is not universally applicable in the small church, for ease of understanding, "church leader(s)" is generic and includes "pastor(s)," "deacon(s)," "elder(s)," and any other(s) in "church leadership." Additionally, Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines "custom" as, "long established practice considered as unwritten law," and "culture," as "the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time."¹²⁹ Scriptures references are from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of the course:

1. The student will have a foundation for encouraging, supporting, and leading the small church.
2. The student will know better how to understand church culture through investigation and relationship building within the small church.
3. The student will be able to recognize and identify specific customs within the small church.

¹²⁹ Inc Merriam-Webster

4. The student will learn how to adapt his or her current skill set to compliment the small church.
5. The student will have some practical tools necessary for successfully leading the small church.

Required Texts:

Anthony Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*. n.p.: Alban Institute, 2002.

Glenn C. Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008.

Further Study Texts:

Glenn C Daman, *Leading the Small Church*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006.

James L Killen Jr., *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*.

Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.

Class Agenda Suggestion:¹³⁰

Friday	5:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Sections I & II
Saturday	8:00 am – 12:00 pm	Sections III & IV

¹³⁰ Any schedule may be adapted. However, allotted teaching time should not be less than 6 hours.

Alternative Suggestion:

Saturday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm (Sections I & II)
 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (Sections III & IV)

Alternative Suggestion:

Monday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Section I
Tuesday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Section II
Thursday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Section III
Friday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Section IV

Course Outline:

- I. How can church leaders better understand small church culture within Sanilac County?
 - A. Understand small church culture by realizing people are key.
 - B. Understand small church culture by facilitating relationships.
 - C. Understand small church culture by studying the history of the church.
 - D. Understand small church culture by learning kindred relationships.
 - E. Understand small church culture by being inquisitive.
 - F. Understand small church culture by building relationships.
 - G. Understand small church culture by recognizing some general Sanilac County rules.

- II. How might church leaders identify the customs within the small church in Sanilac County?
- A. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by astute observation.
 - B. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by listening.
 - C. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County through curiosity.
 - D. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by looking in the mirror.
 - E. Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by making small changes.
- III. How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?
- A. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by planning to stay for the duration.
 - B. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by being authentic and flexible.
 - C. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.
 - D. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by learning to love the people.
 - E. Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by discovering that “Bigger is not necessarily Better.”

IV. How can church leaders gauge success within the small church in Sanilac County?

- A. Church leaders must remain faithful to God.
- B. Church leaders must remain faithful to their families.
- C. Church leaders must remain faithful to the church.
- D. Church leaders must remain faithful to the Word.
- E. Church leaders must remain faithful in prayer.
- F. Church leaders must remain faithful to evangelism

SECTION I

HOW CAN CHURCH LEADERS BETTER UNDERSTAND SMALL CHURCH CULTURE WITHIN SANILAC COUNTY?

Introduction

Moving into Michigan's Sanilac County can prove to be challenging especially for a church leader. Sanilac County's unique culture cannot be anticipated and many are the common workers who quickly come and go because of that uniqueness. Church leaders are no exception. Today's Christian society all but requires formal training in the form of Bible College or seminary for those leading the church. This is a positive requirement as it maintains a semblance of protection for the church and its pulpit. Difficulty often arises, however, from the location of the higher educational institution. Most secondary schools operate in urban areas and students from rural communities adapt to city life or return home without a degree. Students adapting to the ways of the city is the basis for most difficulties for those who move into Sanilac County.¹³¹

Sanilac County is predominately rural. Although agriculture has always been a staple industry in the county, in the wake of the recession agriculture came into its own as a major financial contributor to the county. Today many jobs in Sanilac County relate directly to the agricultural and dairy industries. Lawyers stay busy with land contracts

¹³¹ Thirty-three percent of the pastors interviewed were not native to Sanilac County, pastoral interview summaries, 109, 117, 119, 121, 131.

and farmland rental agreements while the grocery stores stock locally grown produce. Other stores in Sanilac County focus on supplying industry specific merchandise and setting store hours accordingly, meeting farmer's needs. With much of the county's focus on rural living, those who move into the area, especially urbanites, struggle to understand the culture. Cities have abundant twenty-four hour stores and restaurants. However, most businesses in the county are closed by 8:00 P.M. and restaurants change ownership frequently.

The Bible College or seminary graduate knows he/she is no longer in a metropolitan area when the main form of Friday night entertainment is a high school football game that also doubles as a family reunion. The church leader who is new to Sanilac County will use precious resources in the attempt to integrate into the small church community without understanding their customs and culture. This workshop teaches four basic principles about the small church in Sanilac County: relationships (Phil. 2:2-5), patience (Js. 5:7-8), love (Mk. 12:31), and faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:2). These principles correlate with each section as the student learns to 1) understand the culture by building relationships, 2) develop patience by identifying church customs, 3) loving people by adapting one's lifestyle to be 4) successful through faithfulness. The first step to integration is to build relationships with local people. The following is an anthology compiled from interviews with various small church leaders throughout Sanilac County and supported by pertinent literature. This author is also a native Sanilac County small church leader, and thus understands the culture therein.

How can church leaders better understand small church culture within Sanilac County?

Understanding the community in which one lives is the first step toward integrating into that community. It is imperative for church leaders to know how to build this understanding. Moreover, learning how to incorporate one's self into the small local church in a systematic manner is fundamental. It is important to recognize that biblical authors understood the culture in which they ministered. For example, Matthew's audience was primarily Jewish. This is evident from his lack of explanation concerning Jewish culture (Matt. 15:1-20). Matthew's purpose, to show Jesus as the Messiah the Jews were expecting, is further evidence of a Jewish audience.¹³² Whereas, it is believed that Mark wrote to a primarily Roman audience. Turning again to Jewish culture, unlike Matthew, Mark records the same account regarding the custom of hand washing (Mk. 7:1-23). However, in verse three of chapter seven Mark explains the significance behind the Pharisees' question regarding the disciples not holding to Jewish tradition, thus revealing a non-Jewish audience. Matthew and Mark adapted their writing according to a target audience. This same principle of adaptation is vital for church leaders who desire an effective ministry in a new community.

Relationship building has been demonstrated by God and is foundational for leaders throughout the Bible. Striving to imitate God is important for Christian leaders, as God is the initiator of relationships. For example, God introduced himself and entered into a relationship with Abram in chapter seventeen verses one through fourteen of Genesis. This meeting began a relationship between God and the nation of Israel as well

¹³² *The MacArthur Study Bible*, ed. John MacArthur, Jr., electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1389.

(Gen. 17:7-8). The New Testament records Jesus initiating relationships with Peter, Andrew, James, and John in the books of Matthew and Mark (Matt. 4:18-22; Mk. 1:16-20). It also records Jesus initiating relationships with Matthew and his coworkers as they dined together in Matthew's house (Lk. 5:29-30). Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is yet another example of God initiating a relationship with man (Acts 9:3-6). Striving to initiate relationships is important for church leaders, as it follows God's example. Based on these biblical principles, Section I includes ways to gain understanding of small church culture with the goal of building relationships, as seventeen percent of the answers given through the pastoral interviews dealt with building relationships.¹³³

Understanding small church culture by realizing people are key.

After supper, Jesus took a basin of water and a towel and began washing the feet of the disciples (Jn.13:2-16). When Jesus had finished and returned to his seat, he told them, "You also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn. 13:14b). Jesus was telling his disciples to serve one another as he demonstrated the importance of people. Romans chapter twelve and verse ten parallels Jesus' response as it states, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." Serving in these ways require an understanding of people. Venturing to comprehend the church in order to serve its people accordingly is a primary responsibility for church leaders. It is important to possess the correct perspective for leadership.

¹³³ Included in cultural data on page 68.

It was stated during the interview section of this study that church leaders tend to enter a new ministry with innovative ideas and a mindset to change the world.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, the majority of those ideas come from the desire to be successful. Ambitions are suitable, but one must also consider how those ambitions align with transforming to Christ-likeness. Furthermore, considering how appropriate the ideas are for the geographical area and the culture is important. Understanding the people in the congregation is foundational for relationship building and precedes changes by church leaders. Building relationships assists church leaders in understanding the reasons behind the congregation's actions. The church leaders' goal is changing the congregation to mirror Christ as stated in second Corinthians three verse eighteen.

Sixty percent of the church leaders interviewed indicated that Sanilac County churches have undergone little change.¹³⁵ Some church leaders reported adding overhead projectors and movie screens but the use of these items vary. In two of those churches, the congregation does not use their projector for music because they are partial to hymnals.¹³⁶ Two other churches boxed up their hymnals because they love the use of the projector.¹³⁷ It is the church leader's responsibility to understand the congregation by building relationships with the goal of learning why their church makes the decisions they do. One could learn that a deceased member of an influential family donated the hymnals. Although the use of hymnals is customary, it is grounded in culture. This is

¹³⁴ Church leader interview summary, 121.

¹³⁵ Data included in cultural statistics on page 62.

¹³⁶ Church leader interview summaries, 117, 126.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 123, 128.

valuable information that might not be common knowledge throughout the congregation. However, if a new church leader suggested the use of an already installed projector over the family heirloom hymnals, he or she can have a shorter tenure than expected, and lose the opportunity for a Christ-like transformation. Paul suggests the promotion of peace in Romans chapter twelve verse eighteen, which exemplifies Christ's care and compassion while serving the church.

Sixty percent of the church leaders interviewed explained that most churches have controlling families.¹³⁸ New church leaders often underestimate controlling families and the influence of key people in the congregation. Advice during the interviews was given detailing that before building relationships and understanding people's position in the church, it is imperative to treat everyone as though they have patriarchal or matriarchal status.¹³⁹ In time, the result will be acceptance by one's congregants, which will assist in solidifying a meaningful relationship. It is important to remember that one person's importance is not greater than another through the eyes of God. The Lord told Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:7, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Those with high social status in the church can cause feelings of inadequacy for a new church leader. Holding to 1 Samuel 16:7 can lend encouragement while dealing with these issues.

There is no question that God loves people. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Church leaders have a tendency to dismiss this truth by placing mission over purpose. The church leader's mission is to

¹³⁸ See results of question 2 on page 63.

¹³⁹ Data included in controlling family statistics on page 63.

make disciples, baptize, and teach (Matt. 28:19-20), but the purpose is in God's love for people, so much he does not wish for any to perish (2 Pet. 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4). If God loves people enough to come to earth as the final sacrifice, should God's ambassadors care any less (2 Corinthians 5:20)?

Church leaders who view the small church as a stepping stone and have visions of moving up the proverbial ladder tend to place little emphasis on building relationships with the congregation.¹⁴⁰ This can result in failure as God's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). He/she would be the church leader that, within his/her right as the leader of the church, boxed up all the hymnals and placed them in storage without saying a word to anyone. He/she would also be the church leader who, Sunday after service, began checking the internet for church jobs. People are important, as they set the dynamics of the church and they can affect a church leader's ministry. The interviewed pastors advised deferring personal agendas and portfolio building until the church leader realizes the influence of the individuals in the pews. Church leaders serve people, not agendas, as demonstrated by Christ. A church leader who serves people as Jesus did at the Last Supper (Jn13:4-5) will have pages added to their portfolio that are beyond imagination, as Psalm 35:27 states, "Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

Understand small church culture by facilitating relationships.

Relationships are important to Jesus. The Bible has many examples proving this statement and some have already been given. However, it is important to consider some

¹⁴⁰ Church leader interview summary, 121.

of Jesus' relationships found in the New Testament. Also important are some of the activities in which Jesus participated in while with his friends. The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is essential, but recognizing his humanness is helpful to guide today's Christians through daily life.

Spending time with natives of a culture is helpful for learning about the people within that culture. Jesus did just that. He travelled from town to town and spent time visiting and enjoying people's company. For example, Jesus visited Peter and his family in Capernaum (Matt. 8:14), he visited Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany (Lk. 10:38), and he stayed at Zacchaeus' house in Jericho (Lk. 19:1-5). The area in which Jesus traveled was not vast enough to vary greatly in culture. However, relational principles are evident throughout Jesus' life and in his travels. Twenty percent of the pastors interviewed in Sanilac County reported that many places are available for a new church leader to converse or simply listen while applying relational principles and learning about the area.¹⁴¹ For example, McDonalds and Dairy Queen are meeting places for the elderly to enjoy breakfast and each other's company. Acceptance as a "regular" does take time, but anyone is welcome. Sanilac County's small churches have people over fifty who represent the "McDonalds crowd."

Beyond visiting at people's homes, Jesus also participated in other activities that assisted in relationship building. Jesus went to social events such as the wedding in Cana recorded in John chapter two verses one and two and the weeklong Feast of the Tabernacle also recorded by John in chapter seven verses ten through fifteen. He built relationships while hiking in the mountains (Jn. 6:3), boating on one occasion (Mk. 4:36),

¹⁴¹ See statistical report on page 62.

and fishing on another (Lk. 5:4-7). The pastoral interviews revealed Michigan as a sportsman's paradise providing outdoor activities requiring time with people of similar interests. Some congregational members are anglers, trappers, or hunters. A new church leader emulating Jesus by gaining interest in some of these activities opens opportunities for quality time with congregants. Sportsmanship is not the only extracurricular activity in the county, as crafts and craft shows also have large followings in Sanilac County. While the type of activity is not important, sixty percent of the interviewed pastors suggested looking for opportunities to spend time with God's people because understanding the congregation provides easier integration into the culture.¹⁴²

While discussing Sanilac County during the interviews several suggestions focused on integration. The following ideas or suggestions fall into the categories of building relationships or knowing culture, which can be viewed in the chart on page 70. The suggestions begin with participating in a hobby, as it is one way to integrate quickly into a church community. For example, one church leader suggested that guns are important to the community's culture and many church members belong to any one of several shooting ranges or shooting clubs. Furthermore, taking a Concealed Pistol License class or joining a gun club promotes camaraderie between others who share similar interests and demonstrates a willingness to stay in the area.¹⁴³ 4-H, a community youth development organization, is another large organization in Sanilac County. Another pastor offered that the larger communities hold annual 4-H fairs, where members

¹⁴² Statistical data concerning importance of relationship building on page 67.

¹⁴³ Church leader interview summary, 115.

are encouraged to display their crafts, projects, and animals.¹⁴⁴ All of the exhibits are open during the week of the fair for the public's viewing pleasure. Therefore, attending these annual events is highly recommended, providing a plethora of opportunities to interact with congregants and build relationships with the rest of the community.

As indicated during the interviews, Sanilac County has many other hobbies and sports in which a new church leader could participate with the intention of learning local and church cultures. The bowling leagues and pool tournaments provide winter activities along with the weekly fish fry at the Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) hall. Some ride snowmobiles, others participate in ice fishing, and yet others visit one of Sanilac County's many bars for friendship and laughter as reported by thirteen percent of the church leaders interviewed.¹⁴⁵ The bars serve some of the best food in Sanilac County. For this reason, church members frequent them often, although a regular practice of this by clergy was not advised. In the spring and summer, Lake Huron thaws and warms enough for water sports. These activities can promote feelings of comfort as congregants realize their church leader's goal is community integration and relationship building, not career advancement. The example of Christ working diligently on relationships is the central idea for all of these and the following suggestions.

Other relationship building exercises were suggested throughout the interviews. For example, a night of dinner and games facilitates relationships with the congregation. Church leaders opening their home for visiting parishioners are another suggestion. The small Sanilac County congregations welcome the opportunity to interact in a relaxed

¹⁴⁴Church leader interview summary, 127.

¹⁴⁵ This data was combined with other similar statistics that represent the typical farming community. See farming community statistics on page 62.

environment. An elaborate dinner is not necessary, as one would find on the Thanksgiving or Easter table. Sloppy Joes, pizza, tacos, even beef stew or soup and sandwiches would be appropriate. The interviewed pastors suggest these ideas not to impress others through cooking or an immaculate house, but to facilitate a long trustworthy relationship leading to a strong, healthy church.

Facilitating a time of visitation or games after dinner was also suggested. These activities provide opportunity to view the people behind their facades.¹⁴⁶ Many of the older congregants in Sanilac County enjoy playing cards. However, old tradition dictates that cards are of the Devil; and to this day, people teach that a deck of cards is “The Devil’s Bible.”¹⁴⁷ Discern where dinner guests’ beliefs are on the issue before making the suggestion. The purpose is to facilitate relationships and not offend God’s people.

Jesus not only used extracurricular activities to build relationships, he also demonstrated that he understood his followers’ jobs, home situations, intimate family details, cultures, and customs. For example, when Jesus spoke to the multitudes he spoke in parables (Matt. 13:34-35). The parables were stories and illustrations that were congruent with his audiences’ lifestyles or life experiences. The parable of the sower recorded in Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-5 consisted of a farmer sowing seed. A number of his audience could have related to the story because they were farmers themselves or they understood farmers. Jesus consistently used parables that were directed to his audience. Luke writes in chapter eighteen and verse nine, “Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised

¹⁴⁶ Church leader interview summary, 119.

¹⁴⁷ “Cards- the Devil’s Bible,” in *End-Time Deliverance Ministry Demonbuster.com Deliverance Manual*, <http://www.demonbuster.com/cards.html> (accessed January 15, 2013).

others...” Jesus then continued with the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. In much the same as Jesus knew his audience, it is important for today’s church leaders to know their audience. The following are suggestions from the pastors during the interviews for further understanding of one’s congregation.

Small church members in Sanilac County are dedicated to their jobs and often accept overtime, which complicates schedules. A record of a place of employment, their type of work and their typical schedule is helpful for new church leaders. Although agriculture is a large part of this county and many businesses revolve around it, not everyone farms. Some work at the pickle factory, some in the lumberyards, and yet others in the construction trade. Learning a person’s place of employment and his or her capabilities can be an enormous asset for building relationships. It is difficult to carry on a conversation when there is little in common. People in Sanilac County tend to talk about their work, as it consumes their time. Most likely, the new church leader from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago has never seen a cement yard nor has knowledge about cement grades and additives. A Google search can give information leading to a quality conversation with a congregant who also works at the local cement yard.

Scheduling can be challenging with a large variety of work schedules and events. However, Sanilac County is not particularly difficult because most businesses close by eight o’clock. Even most factories do not have a midnight shift. It is important for a church leader to know commerce of the area where he or she serves. For example, according to one of the pastors interviewed, Detroit Michigan’s suburbs are full of industry and most factories operate twenty-four hours. The Detroit church leader who

fails to note the congregant's jobs and schedules might find visiting difficult and scheduling events nearly impossible.¹⁴⁸

The genealogies of the Bible were used to maintain a record of lineage for tribe membership, royalty, birthdates, and other important dates (1 Chr. 1-9). It was also used as a registry in Nehemiah 7:5 and demonstrated the bloodline of Christ in Matthew 1:1-17. The church directory can serve in a similar capacity but with more flexibility. It can be used by a church leader to record jobs and schedules, as well as being a useful tool for memorizing names and faces of the congregants, as suggested during the interviews.¹⁴⁹ The directory can also be used for recording, birthdays, and important dates. Church leaders underestimate the power of remembering names. Remembering peoples' names is important as it meets their needs and demonstrates that others care about them. This is particularly true of children. Lyle Schaller points out in his book *The Small Membership Church* that calling a child by name proves that a church leader understands what is important and it shows a conscience effort of acceptance.¹⁵⁰ Schaller illustrates the importance of knowing someone by name by using the popular television show "Cheers." Cheers' famous theme song uses these words:

*Where everybody knows your name,
and they're always glad you came.
You wanna be where you can see,
Our troubles are all the same
You wanna be where everybody knows
Your name.*¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Church leader interview summary, 131.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 125.

¹⁵⁰ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Membership Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 25-26.

¹⁵¹ Gary Portnoy and Judy Hart Angelo, *Cheers Theme Lyrics* (n.p.: LyricsOnDemand.com, 2013), <http://www.lyricsondemand.com/tvthemes/cheerslyrics.html> (accessed January 15, 2013).

The show was “the most-watched television program” of the 1980’s and early 1990’s.¹⁵² People relate to the Cheers theme song and sympathize with a place that is familiar and friendly. This is similar in Sanilac County’s small churches. Every church leader interviewed described their church as friendly and accepting at one point or another in the interview. They stressed that everybody knows everybody else and there is a feeling of acceptance, comfort, and an atmosphere of family.¹⁵³ A portion of this may be due to family ties. However, the majority of these feelings would certainly be true, as small churches in this county are recognized for their friendly atmosphere and care for the community.¹⁵⁴

Church directories are expensive. Therefore, a book of names and pictures may not be readily available. This is unfortunate for the church leader who struggles to remember names. The use of a Smartphone is an alternative. Today’s Smartphones have picture-taking capabilities and most have provisions for attaching a picture to a phone number. One pastor believes the Smartphone is perfect for the new church leader, citing its necessity to build a database of phone numbers and addresses. The suggestion was also made to attach a photo and notes about place of employment, work schedule, birthdates, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and any other applicable data.¹⁵⁵ Accomplishing

¹⁵² Schaller, *The Small Membership Church*, 25.

¹⁵³ Church leader interview summary, 107.

¹⁵⁴ This data spans the collection of six questions and is divided into categories of knowing culture and building relationships. The chart for these categories is located on page 70.

¹⁵⁵ Church leader interview summary, 131.

the task of building a congregational database enhances the church leader's ability to build relationships.

Informal church activities play an important role in becoming acquainted with the congregation. Informal events are those that do not require church attendance or participation in the Sunday morning service. These can include a trip to the beach for a picnic lunch or pizza at the church. Pizza and a movie night with a Christian-based movie was a combined activity suggested by a pastor. Other pastors suggested simple "icebreaker" events as they are inexpensive and help identify those who wish to be involved and those who do not. Participation in these events may be limited, as twenty-seven percent of the pastors interviewed reported a lack of congregational participation.¹⁵⁶ Church leaders who are observant and show a genuine love for the congregation facilitate an opportunity for congregational change toward Christ-likeness.

Understand small church culture by studying the history of the church.

History is of vital importance to the survival of Christian heritage. Jesus often refers to history during discourse throughout the Gospels. For example, Matthew records a conversation between Jesus and rich ruler that reveals history as an important element of Jesus' teaching (Matt. 19:16-26). The young man asked Jesus what he could do to obtain eternal life. Jesus response was, "Keep the commandments." Jesus was referring to the law set for God's people that were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, which is recorded in Exodus chapters nineteen and twenty. His purpose was to prove to the young man that it was impossible to live up to the law, "But with God all things are possible" (Matt.

¹⁵⁶ Statistic on chart on page 64.

19:26). Certainly, Jesus was referring to his part in pardoning mankind's transgressions. Just as Jesus demonstrated the importance of history in this story to teach a man to move forward in faith, church leaders can also use church history to move forward in faith. A church leader can better understand a church's culture by taking an in-depth look at the history of the church.¹⁵⁷ Some congregants might suggest, "That was in the past," or "Church leader, so and so caused that to happen." One might also hear, "You're being nosy" or "You have no business looking at those records." The God-appointed leader of the church has the authority to investigate the church. A new church leader might ask why it is important to look at the history of the church when the mission is to move forward. However, the future of the church is found in the past in much the same way as the future of humanity is found in its beginning. One could not understand the purpose for the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 14:20; 16:12) or the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-14) without first understanding the fall of man in Genesis chapter three. Knowing how to move a church forward is often found in identifying where it has been. This could commence by contacting previous church leaders with the hope of identifying previous success and previous failure. Some churches have difficulty keeping church leaders on staff. The First Baptist Church Augusta, Wisconsin is an example. Their website states, "Since the church was founded in 1861 we've been blessed with 43 pastors."¹⁵⁸ That means their typical church leader can only plan to stay about three and a half years. In most small congregations, three and a half years does not allow enough time to earn trust or begin long-term planning.

¹⁵⁷ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 53-54.

¹⁵⁸ First Baptist Church Augusta, *Our History* (Augusta, WI, 2008), <http://www.fbc-augusta.org/ourhistory/ourhistory.html> (accessed January 15, 2013).

Studying the tenure of church leaders will also reveal long tenures. Church leaders who have been at one church for twenty or more years are difficult to replace.¹⁵⁹ This does not mean that they do a better job than do others. However, it does mean that the people in the congregation have grown accustomed to the ways of their church leader and a new church leader will probably not meet their expectations. For this reason, church leaders should know [rule of the trade] not to expect to stay more than two years if they follow a long tenured church leader. In the same regards, church leaders also show caution when discussing a call to a church if the previous church leader or interim is planning on continual attendance.¹⁶⁰

A church's history of the church leader's tenure can be a relatively accurate reflection of the church leader-congregation relationship.¹⁶¹ If short tenures were normal for the church, spending more time in relationship building would be appropriate to prove genuine love for God's people. It can be assumed that either previous church leaders used the church for career advancement or the church rejected the leadership of the church leader. Regardless of the reasons, the correct approach is to focus on relationships to build trust and confidence between all parties involved (Phil. 2:2-5).

Investigating the history of the church building can offer insight as to the culture of the congregation (Solomon's Temple, 1 Kgs. 6:1. 38; Zerubbabel's Temple, Jer. 41:4-5; Herod's Temple, Jn. 2:20).¹⁶² Did the church start in someone's living room or a

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Reverend Michael Sanders during proposal drafting, 22.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Church leader interview summary, 125.

¹⁶² Ibid., 123.

storefront? If so, how long did it take to move into a permanent building? A church leader paying special attention to the names of those who started the church might reveal the current “powerhouse” families.¹⁶³ While investigating, it could be helpful to note how long the current building has been in use and identify what modifications exist to the original building. Do the windows have the original stained glass? Is the trim original or has it been upgraded? What are the dates for the modifications? These are all pieces of the culture puzzle. The lights in the sanctuary are a good indicator that tradition abounds in the church. There are many reasons to update lighting, the first of which is safety and others are ascetics and progression. However, there are only two reasons for a church to have eighty-year-old lighting. Finances are the first reason, and tradition is the second. Look to see if the church has exit signs and exit lighting. If these safety features have been installed, finances are not the issue and a new church leader might expect that tradition is strong in the church. An abundance of tradition means that church leaders would do well to consider that changes are more difficult and will take additional time as tradition is entrenched in the church’s culture.¹⁶⁴

While looking at the history of the church building, a church leader might notice how many times the congregation moved to a different location, and how many additions exist. Location changes and additions can mean church growth. Two churches in the Deckerville area each record at least three additions. However, survey of the church history indicates that the last addition on the first church occurred nearly thirty years

¹⁶³ Church leader interview summary, 123.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 107.

ago.¹⁶⁵ In contrast, the last addition on the second church occurred within the last three years.¹⁶⁶ This does not mean that one church is more effective than the other is. In fact, both churches are effective in their own respects. These are merely clues regarding the culture of the congregation. Perhaps the first church is bound by biblical principles about borrowing money and they have established a building fund while they patiently wait on God for his timing. It is impossible to draw concrete conclusions from any one aspect of church history and looking at the complete picture will assist the church leader in his or her quest for relationships and integration.

The church calendar is another piece needed to complete the picture of church history. Church leaders will begin to understand what is expected of him or her by looking at the activities conducted by the church in the last five or ten years. Some churches take last year's calendar and copy the events over for the next year. The dates remain nearly the same and the events rarely change. Unpredictable is a word that describes other churches. Small churches in Sanilac County are predominately the former. If a church leader is assiduous in observing the church calendar, he or she will know if the church usually has a Christmas Eve service or if the children are expected to perform for Easter Sun Rise service. Knowledge of even a small amount of church history has the potential to alleviate many worries that come from not having the knowledge of what is normal to the church.

¹⁶⁵ Church leader interview summary, 107.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 127.

A church calendar can also reveal other important bits of information.¹⁶⁷ Does the church believe in fundraisers? Does the church have potluck or catered dinners? Does the church participate in community hymn sings or events with other churches? Some of these have the potential to cause a new church leader difficulty. For example, a congregation in Croswell Michigan does not believe in fundraisers.¹⁶⁸ They feel that relying on God for funds is the biblical approach. A hypothetical example is seen where a congregation called a new church leader who failed to check the previous calendar before putting forth his annual plan. The previous calendar included meetings scheduled to discuss recovering the pews and replacing the pedals on the organ. The new church leader's annual plan included multiple fundraisers to finance the new vision God gave him consisting of a new contemporary sanctuary. Obviously, the congregation and the new church leader were not congruent in their philosophy of church growth and raising church funds.

A church leader concerned with understanding church culture, in addition to investigating the history of the church building or the activities on the church calendar should also look for schedules of business meetings. The presence of business meetings offers information regarding whether the congregation makes the decisions, or if a few influential members make them at the barbershop.¹⁶⁹ In some instances, the church leader has sole control of the church and is not required to bring decisions to the church.¹⁷⁰ If a

¹⁶⁷ Church leader interview summary, 119.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 125.

¹⁶⁹ Twenty percent of the church leaders mentioned this in question number one. Statistic located on page 62.

¹⁷⁰ Church leaders interview summaries, 117, 123.

church leader finds him/herself in this position it is best to approach the leaders of the church with an agenda and request input.¹⁷¹ Taking decisions to the church will demonstrate humility and genuine concern for the congregation. Shared decisions foster a congregation's respect for the church leader. It is difficult to lead a church without respect. A church leader who leads without shared congregational decision-making often resembles a dictator who will earn fear instead of the respect he or she desires.¹⁷²

The new church leader might gain insight into the church by checking the business meeting minutes for major doctrinal changes. If there are changes, then observation for a correlation between major doctrinal changes and the list of church leader's tenure can indicate a congregation that stands firm on doctrine or one that is thrown by the winds of doctrine as indicated in Ephesians chapter four and verse fourteen. Attempting to determine how the change was introduced could also be beneficial. Establishing a correlation between the business meeting, doctrinal changes if any, and the perceived culture of the church could indicate avenues of willing change. It could also indicate sacred customs.¹⁷³ Viewing everything together can illuminate past difficulties, disagreements or times of church growth.

Some small churches in Sanilac County adopt certain characteristics because of unfortunate events.¹⁷⁴ While studying the history of the church one could find checking for any legal action taken against the church as beneficial. Some churches set policies

¹⁷¹ Church leader interview summary, 117.

¹⁷² Killen, *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 8-9.

¹⁷³ Church leader interview summary, 120.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 129.

because of a car accident or an allergy attack or other circumstances experienced in the church. For example, one of the church leaders interviewed set policy for background checks for those wishing to work with children. This came about when it was brought to the attention of the deacon board that a convicted child sex offender was attending the church.¹⁷⁵ When things like these happen, they are unfortunate and can have a detrimental emotional and/or financial effect on the church and its congregation. Written policies protect the church and its congregants, and certain churches may be hesitant to begin new ministries or involve outsiders because of an unfortunate experience. Church leaders have a responsibility to become aware of these issues and protect God's people.

A church leader indicated that churches with children's programs are at risk for child abuse accusations. Church leaders must inquire about such things, as these things could explain the reasons for some customs and the fluidity of those customs. If a church leader discovers a past child abuse problem, he/she is responsible for learning about the participants and the incident details. This information is not pleasant to learn about, but the church leader must protect the children and innocent people under his/her care.¹⁷⁶

A study of church history is not complete without studying the church's involvement in the community. How has the church served the community in the past? Are they expected to participate in certain community activities? For example, some of the churches have held a community Easter service and certain churches known for ecumenical policies are expected to attend. Does the church participate with "See you at the Pole," or the Fourth of July parade? Some churches host a community nativity scene.

¹⁷⁵ Church leader interview summary, 107.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 129.

It is good for a church leader to determine church involvement in these community activities before the occasion arrives.

Two church leaders reported annual church schedules that included community cookouts and spaghetti dinners.¹⁷⁷ Church leaders can attempt to determine how these events shaped the culture of the church. Perhaps, the event is a custom and has become a part of the church culture. Some customs are unchangeable and some could be changed but no one would change them, as indicated by another church leader.¹⁷⁸ The strawberry social at the local Methodist church is an example of an event that could be changed. However, it is an event that the community expects every year and functions as wonderful community outreach. People who normally do not attend church make an exception for the famous annual strawberry social. Therefore, the congregation would not change it.¹⁷⁹

Project Blessing is one community outreach program in which most churches in Sanilac County participate. Instead of maintaining a benevolence fund or a food pantry, the church supports Project Blessing with finances, nonperishable goods, and clothing. Most churches have members who volunteer regularly to help at any one of the Project Blessing sites. Church leaders vary in their expectations of their congregations' participation. Regardless, a new church leader's awareness of this and other community-centered programs is vital for understanding his/her church members.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Church leader interview summaries, 115, 133.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 109.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 133.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 111.

Community involvement is generally coupled with ecumenical participation.¹⁸¹

Has the church participated in events across denomination lines? Some of the small church leaders in Sanilac County call themselves “separatists,” meaning they only fellowship with other believers having similar doctrine.¹⁸² Other church leaders in this county have a slightly different Christian worldview, as they look for opportunities to collaborate with other denominations in reaching the lost with the Gospel message.¹⁸³ Church leaders need to know where their church stands on such issues.

The church’s ecumenical policy is a good beginning for understanding the congregation’s openness to new ideas and innovations. A collaborative congregation might be more willing to include various worship styles, fundraisers, and community events. A less collaborative congregation, as indicated by one of the interviewed church leaders, holds dogmatically to doctrine and relies on the supremacy of Christ for lost souls, as they enjoy united fellowship amongst each other.¹⁸⁴ Ecumenical policies point to the customs of the church and its culture.

Culture can also be identified through the financial history of the church. Returning to the example from Matthew chapter nineteen, in verse twenty-one Jesus tests the rich man’s depth of desire for eternal life, as he tells the man to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. Little tells a church leader more about a church than its financial history. Is trust in God a part of the church’s culture? This is a primary question

¹⁸¹ Church leader interview summary 119.

¹⁸² Ibid., 117, 129.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 123.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 117.

that every church leader wonders about his/her church. Ultimately, the primary question regards the congregation's tithing patterns. Do members tithe and if so, how many members tithe according to the Gospel (Heb. 7:1-10)? Does the church pay its apportionments to the denomination? Does the church support local or foreign missionaries, both, or none? Do the church members believe in financially taking care of the church leader? These questions stand in the mind of every church leader who is new to a post. Unfortunately, community culture, to a degree, dictates the answers. Sanilac County is predominantly poor. According to US Census data, median income for Sanilac County, the State of Michigan and US was \$40,437, \$48,669 and \$52,762 respectively. However, the per capita income, or income per person for Sanilac County, Michigan and the US was \$20,056, \$25,482, and \$27,915 respectively. Additionally, according to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the unemployment rate in Sanilac County verse Michigan in 2012 was 15% verse 12.5%, and the number of children living in poverty was 26% (Sanilac County) verse 23% (Michigan). Analysis of this data reveals that Sanilac County's income, and single-parent income is significantly lower, and unemployment rates and the number of children living in poverty is significantly higher than both the State of Michigan, which is itself in a depressed state, verses the United States.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, church income can be expected to be lower than other areas in

¹⁸⁵ United States Census Bureau, *State & Country QuickFacts* (n.p.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html> (accessed March 24, 2013).; United States Census Bureau, *State & Country QuickFacts: Michigan* (n.p.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26000.html> (accessed March 24, 2013).; United States Census Bureau, *State & Country QuickFacts: Sanilac County, Michigan* (n.p.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/26151.html> (accessed March 24, 2013).; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "Michigan," in *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* (n.p.: University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute, 2013), <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/michigan/2012/compare-counties/151> (accessed March 24, 2013).

Michigan. However, this is not what all the church leaders interviewed have reported.¹⁸⁶

While there has been a general decrease in giving, another church leader indicated that churches in Sanilac County maintain their ability to pay their bills.¹⁸⁷

The same church leader advised observation of those churches that constantly neglect their apportionments and miss paying the church leader on a regular basis. Church members from these churches display poor judgment, and a lack of belief in God's sufficiency. It was also advised to address this issue of unbelief quickly and with the fear of God's judgment for being unbelieving.¹⁸⁸ Many other issues can be adjusted in time and should be addressed after the church leader understands the congregation. However, addressing these issues quickly does not mean hastily or with a lack of grace. It is vitally important to approach financial issues with finesse. Matthew 10:16 states, "Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." There is good reason for this advice, as many congregations can assume the role of the wolf and attack their church leaders. Matthew continues in verse seventeen, "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues." These words are particularly true in reference to money. Reviewing the financial history of the church can be detrimental for the church leader, but adding it to the list of necessary steps in studying the church's history is needed to gain a complete understanding of the congregation.

Lastly, the congregation's attendance records are an indispensable part of the church's history. After a church leader understands his/her congregation through an

¹⁸⁶ Church leader interview summary, 113.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 131.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

extensive period of relationship building, he/she often will institute small projects that will begin moving the church forward. The projects may be minor; however, they serve as an avenue for developing leaders. Attendance records will help in assigning the appropriate leaders to each new project. A person's attendance demonstrates a level of dedication to the church and devotion to God.¹⁸⁹ For example, The Detroit Lions have struggled to grow a quality football program since 1934. The Lions are one of only four teams in the NFL that has not been to a Super Bowl. They are the only team with a 0-16 record since the 1978 schedule increased to 16 games. Nevertheless, Lions fans continue to pack the stadium. Ford Field has a capacity of 65,000 and an average of 63,769 fans fills the seats on game day.¹⁹⁰ These attendance records speak volumes about the devotion of the fans. Regardless of the coach or quarterback, the fans are their supporting their family of Lions fans. If church members were as committed to their church family as Lions fans to their team, the church attendance records would reveal proof of dedication. Do people attend because they are part of the church family or other reasons? The purpose is to understand the congregation with God-honoring change in focus.

Understand small church culture by learning kindred relationships.

The family is important throughout the Bible. God instituted the family unit in Genesis chapter one verse twenty-six and seven. The story of Abram and Ishmael in Genesis chapter sixteen displays the importance of kindred relations as it deals with children. Sarai and Abram desired children, especially a son to carry on the family name.

¹⁸⁹ Church leader interview summary, 125.

¹⁹⁰ ESPN Internet Ventures, *NFL Attendance - 2012* (n.p.: ESPN.com, 2013), <http://espn.go.com/nfl/attendance> (accessed January 16, 2013).

Sarai, against God's will, gave her servant Hagar to Abram with the intent of giving him an heir. This story further displays the importance of family when Sarai had a son of her own, Isaac, and God demanded him sacrificed on the altar (Gen. 22:1-19). Just as the sacrifice of Isaac by Abram represented Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the relationship between God and man metaphorically resembles the family unit (Jn. 1:12-13). Recorded in Matthew (1:1-17) and Luke (3:23-38) are the family descendants of Jesus demonstrating the importance of kindred relationships. Family kinships also exist in the small congregations and it can be difficult for church leaders to discern who is related to whom. Adding to this difficulty, some colloquialisms in Sanilac County are said as follows, "everybody knows everybody," "everybody knows everything," and "everybody is related somehow."¹⁹¹ These colloquialisms can translate as problems for new small church leaders. It is common for a church leader to converse with a trusted member of the congregation about the person who works at the corner store or at the local gas station only to have that trusted person say, "Yeah, that's my cousin, I know what you mean."¹⁹² Mistakes like these are usually understood and dismissed, but they would be far less likely if the church leader would take time to map out the family relationships within the church. Mapping out family kinships will lesson mistakes like the one above, but will also create a diagram for hospital visits or a way to build new relationship with a broader base of people.

¹⁹¹ Church leader interview summary, 127.

¹⁹² Anthony Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church* (n.p.: Alban Institute, 2002), 53.

The church leader who visits a church member's aunt or second cousin in the hospital is special in the eyes of the family.¹⁹³ His/her actions show genuine care and concern for not only the member but also for others in the community. As the colloquialism goes, "everybody knows everybody." The local gathering places will be full of discussions about how the new church leader is "worth keeping around." The same is particularly true if the ill person is a child and the church leader institutes a drive for funds to help pay for medical expenses. Church leaders should look for opportunities to serve people in the community because "everybody is related somehow."¹⁹⁴

There are also family ties within the church. Small churches usually have one to three primary families within the congregation.¹⁹⁵ Each family might have ten to twenty members or more. According to small church expert Glenn Daman, one of the families will be the controlling family, usually with the presence of a matriarch and or patriarch.¹⁹⁶ Ninety three percent of the church leaders interviewed for this workshop indicated knowledge of past controlling families, but none indicated a continuation.¹⁹⁷ However, a church leader coming to a small church in Sanilac County should be aware that the presence of a controlling patriarch/matriarch is likely. It is important for the church leader to recognize these families while also recognizing the primary controlling family member, as these families make the major decisions in the church, and they are the members who make the decisions for the church in the barbershop.

¹⁹³ Church leader interview summary, 108.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 127.

¹⁹⁵ Family statistics located on page 65.

¹⁹⁶ Glenn C. Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 43.

¹⁹⁷ Response spans answers in all six preceding questions, 62-69.

Church leaders learn church leadership during their educational process. Applying those lessons in creative ways is imperative when a controlling family is present in the church. A church leader with a strong type A personality must be careful.¹⁹⁸ These families have cared for the church for many generations and they will be reluctant to let an outsider make decisions for them. Carefully building relationships earns trust. This process proves difficult for church leaders because they have a natural desire to move forward in God's mission. Most church leaders, as previously mentioned, understand the mission better than the purpose.

After a church leader has determined how many families are in the church and the relationships within each family, another step is to determine how close the family ties are within the family relationships. What type of relationships do the family members have? Is there discord between family members? Are there hidden family feuds that a church leader might need to avoid? Church leaders serve as counselors, mediators, advice-givers, and simple listening ears. These proverbial hats can place him/her in a complicated position as indicated by one church leader.¹⁹⁹ During the process of building relationships with the purpose of understanding the characteristics of the church, during the interviews it was also recommended to note subtle hints of discord between family members. Noticing these things can save heartache or at least some future difficulty for the family and the church leader.

¹⁹⁸ "Type A personalities – hard-driving, competitive, status-conscious, and seemingly achievement-addicted." Ronald E. Riggio, "Are You a Type A or B Personality?," in *Cutting-Edge Leadership* (n.p.: Psychology Today, June 2012), <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201206/are-you-type-or-b-personality> (accessed January 16, 2013).

¹⁹⁹ Church leader interview summary, 131.

While determining the closeness of family units attempting to understand the general health of family relationships can be beneficial. Information can come from observing the extent of family involvement during holidays. Does the entire family get together? Are there some who are not welcome? Do some family members make an appearance and leave? How much do they enjoy each other's company? These family aspects are important in building a strong church family, and the church family will only be as strong as the individual families.²⁰⁰ Families with discord will often bring discontinuity into the church causing many problems. Families who enjoy each other generally look forward to holiday gatherings. They enjoy playing family games and typically have family nights that involve games, discussion, laughing, loving, and a focus on God's grace and blessings. Demonstrating such closeness within a church leader's own family sets the example for the church.

Church leaders often understand that small churches in Sanilac County are based on family activities. Family discord can ruin an event and can certainly cause visitors to question their level of involvement or even their plans to return another Sunday. Understanding families in the church is a challenging task that requires many carefully asked questions.²⁰¹

Understand small church culture by being inquisitive.

Information can often be gained by being inquisitive. An example of this begins in chapter three of the book of John. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus one night and

²⁰⁰ Church leader interview summary, 107.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 121.

began a dialogue. The conversation began with a statement by Nicodemus concerning the origin of Jesus' teaching. Jesus answered back with a statement about being born a second time that deserved investigation by Nicodemus. His curiosity was aroused and he asked a series of questions in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the topic in which Jesus was speaking about (John 3:-21). It is sometimes very difficult to understand people without being inquisitive. Moreover, the form and structure of a question can alter the thoughts of the person being questioned. Some questions can appear accusatory according to the tone, facial, and body language, and especially in the context of the question. Jesus certainly could have interpreted Nicodemus' first statement differently resulting in a defensive response from Jesus. Instead, Jesus used the moment as a teaching opportunity. Regardless, a church leader's fear of asking questions is not conducive to positive, loving leadership, and positive, loving leadership lends itself to questions that are carefully asked at the appropriate time, with the appropriate intentions and in the correct manner. For example, a conversation about an embezzlement scandal is not an appropriate context to ask about church finances. In the same way, it would be inappropriate to question a deacon about viewing the church tithing records directly after he just confessed eight months of personal financial struggle. More than likely, the deacon will be embarrassed about what he has been able to give, therefore it might be appropriate to wait for the tithing records or ask another person with access to those records.

There are proper ways of asking questions and a church leader can tactfully inquire when a caring attitude is maintained and the church leader aligns his/her motives with biblical standards. One's curiousness about how someone could afford their new car

usually has improper motives. However, a church leader could easily ask about a person's finances, without ulterior motive. In Sanilac County, personal finances are a major source of concern. Pastors frequently ask about finances in order to elicit support from the congregation. It is often more beneficial to ask, to reflect care and concern, and be informed, than to not ask and risk missing the opportunity to help a family in need.²⁰²

Church leaders have been known to “put their foot in their mouth” as the saying goes. This happens when the church leader is misinformed or ignorant. For example, this researcher/church leader recently moved to a new post. He was talking with one of the church couples after service and unknowingly said something about their child enjoying the treats during Sunday School. The couple looked puzzled, the wife ran off crying to the restroom, and the husband explained that they did not have any children. He told this researcher/church leader how they have tried to have children for fifteen years and how disappointed they are. If this researcher/church leader had studied the congregation, he might not have made a mistake that caused emotional pain for this couple who so strongly desired a child. Nicodemus was wise to ask questions of Jesus in much the same way Jesus' disciples sought knowledge of eschatology in Matthew chapter twenty-four and verse three. Building relationships is vital for a church leader and being inquisitive assists in this process.

Understand small church culture by building relationships.

Much has been said already about the importance of and some methods for building relationships. However, relationship building warrants its own section. Church

²⁰² Church leader interview summary, 131.

leaders build relationships with loving intention, instead of acting with an intention and feeling of duty. Authentic actions are noticeable and the converse may be truer.

According to one church leader, a church leader who approaches visitation with a sense of duty will accomplish little more than wasting time, so he or she should visit with the intention of building strong lifelong relationships.²⁰³ Being genuine while enjoying people's company provides strong foundations. Make mental notes of important events, concerns and needs and listen. Develop good listening skills. Hang on every word and then listen some more. Jesus displayed this principle in as he walked with Cleopas and another man toward the village of Emmaus. He listened intentionally to what they had to say, as he encouraged them to talk even more by asking "What things" (Lk. 24:13-32). Just as Luke demonstrated in this passage, people will reveal their problems and their blessings if someone is willing to listen. Killen suggests that while listening to issues that are authentic to the person talking, never negate their concern with a personal story or cover up their hurt with unwarranted advice.²⁰⁴ Simply listen.

A church leader spoke about intentionally meeting people's needs.²⁰⁵ Discovering needs can be as simple as listening to someone's story. Church leader D loves to visit the nursing homes and other shut-ins. Other ways of relationship building could include inviting others to take you on a tour of the local area. While traveling, listening to their story provides them with a sense of caring and the church leaders with valuable information. People want to express their own needs and the needs of others. According

²⁰³ Church leader interview summary, 135.

²⁰⁴ James L Killen Jr., *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 16.

²⁰⁵ Church leader interview summary, 135.

to Pappas, church leaders will do well to listen and remember.²⁰⁶ While building relationships with couples, families, and groups of church members are sometimes easier, a church leader building one-on-one relationships is also important. For purposes here, these are called individual relationships. Individual relationships can be challenging and frightening for church leaders for it is within these relationships that church leaders are most vulnerable. They are expected to transparently share intimate life details and according to one church leader, it is sometimes better for a church leader to be less transparent.²⁰⁷ The most challenging individual relationship situations are with women for male church leaders and with men for female church leaders. The King James Version (KJV) of first Thessalonians five twenty-two states that one must be careful to abstain from the appearance of evil. Building individual relationships are necessary, however it is best to attempt to remain in public places and never hide relationship-building activities from a spouse.

Understand small church culture by recognizing some generalities of Sanilac County.

An interviewed church leader revealed two primary rules about Sanilac County, 1) Do not compare Sanilac County with other places, 2) Do not judge the people of Sanilac County. These are major. The church leader who is always talking about his/her last church and the way they did things over there will most likely have a short tenure in Sanilac County. The people in Sanilac County are proud of the way things are. There is

²⁰⁶ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 34.

²⁰⁷ Church leader interview summary, 129.

little concern about how well others perform a task or how another way is better.²⁰⁸ This attitude is seen in the worship styles, potlucks, community events, Sunday School, children's programs, youth groups, and the list continues in regards to the small church.

The second rule may be more important than the first. "Do not judge us." In Sanilac County, another church leader indicated, people do not "put up a front" and "they tell it like it is."²⁰⁹ The same church leader also indicated that one might go on a visit and find his/her church member on the back porch enjoying a Miller Highlife, while smoking a cigar and shooting at the rabbits in the garden with a 9mm pistol. This is life in Sanilac County and this is why it is difficult for church leaders to integrate and build relationships. Most church leaders would have the notion to confront the man about his sin. However, the church leader who truly cares for his/her people demonstrates love, teaches by example, and prays for change. The church leader who plans to remain a small church leader in Sanilac County must realize that change slowly happens and patience begins with clearly understanding the culture of the small church.

²⁰⁸ Church leader interview summary, 131.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 127.

SECTION II

HOW MIGHT CHURCH LEADERS IDENTIFY THE CUSTOMS WITHIN THE SMALL CHURCH IN SANILAC COUNTY?

Introduction

The primary biblical principle for section II is patience. James writes in chapter five beginning in verse seven, “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (Jm. 5:7-8). Biblical authors often equate the farmer’s harvest with the Lord’s harvest. For example, Matthew writes, “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38), John writes, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest” (Jn. 4:35), and John also writes in the book of Revelation, “for the harvest of the earth is ripe” (Rev. 14:15). According to James in the preceding verses, church leaders are to do their work and wait for the harvest. Patience, a fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22, is a virtue that requires standing strong. For this reason James states, “Establish your hearts” (Jm. 5:8), which has a meaning of spiritual strength. Church leaders can become weary while building relationships, learning church customs and waiting for change. Therefore, church leaders need to heed James’ advice and stand strong.

Furthermore, patience is an important aspect of church leadership. During the church leader interviews, forty-seven percent expressed the need for patience and twenty percent expressed the need to wait for change. Combining the two means that sixty-seven percent of the church leaders interviewed expressed the need for a church leader to be patient.²¹⁰ However, work continues even in patience.

The objective behind this section is found in the identification of customs. This in itself can be a lesson in patience, as often it takes time to learn of customs/traditions. Section I included ways of gaining understanding of small church culture through relationship building. Section II is about identifying church customs while mastering patience. Although the church leader is continuing to work on improving relationships, he/she slowly identifies each custom within the culture of their church. Identifying customs is a step closer to integration and moving closer to integration builds trust. Further suggestions concerning integration are included throughout this section. However, the church leader who is serious about serving Sanilac County and gaining the people's trust takes the initiative, using his/her own creativity matching talents with opportunity.

People in Sanilac County's churches are extremely traditional, which often means slow to change.²¹¹ It could take some churches two years or more to decide what color to paint the kitchen. Furthermore, it could also take a small church in Sanilac County six or seven months to decide on ham or Swedish meatballs for the annual Christmas banquet. Some churches rarely introduce new songs because unfamiliar words in the new songs

²¹⁰ Statistics located on page 67.

²¹¹ Sixty-seven percent of the church leaders reported having a traditional church. Statistics on page 65.

cause frustration,²¹² further enforcing the idea that church leaders need patience. Making solo decisions and changing things quickly can be serious mistakes in a community such as Sanilac County that strongly embraces traditions. Until trust is earned and acceptance is granted, a church leader must plan to maintain status quo.²¹³ Extenuating circumstances do exist but those are generally denominational. For example, church leader K stated during the interview that the congregation did not have the power to remove him as church leader. In this circumstance, the church leader would have a certain amount of latitude to make changes but ultimately, church leaders are called to emulate Christ, and furthermore, congregations speak with their attendance and their wallets.

Throughout the first year in service at a church, the church leader will find things he/she would like to change. He/she might even find some items that require change in order to meet denomination or biblical standards. However, as Abraham patiently endured the trials of life and time while he waited for the fulfillment of God's promises (Heb.6:15), so must today's church leaders live patiently in love while identifying customs and learning to enjoy the culture while waiting for opportunity to make changes.²¹⁴

How might church leaders identify the customs within the small church in Sanilac County?

Identifying the specific customs within the small church is the second step toward success. Building an understanding of church culture cannot be complete without

²¹² Church leader interview summary, 115.

²¹³ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 48.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 50.

identifying specific customs within the church. Returning to a previous Scripture, in the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus was questioned about his disciples not washing their hands, “The Pharisees and scribes asked Him, ‘why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’” (Mk. 7:5) The Scripture proves to demonstrate Mark’s audience as previously noted in Section I. However, it also demonstrates the presence of customs in the Bible. According to Hendriksen and Kistemaker, the authors of the *Baker New Testament Commentary: Matthew*, the “tradition of elders” referred to by the Pharisees is not the Law of Moses.²¹⁵ These traditions or customs are called *Mishnah*, which were oral customs until 120A.D. when they were written down. These were based on the rabbi’s interpretation of the law’s actual meaning.²¹⁶ Hand washing is just one of the customs mentioned. Mark also lists other things that required washing such as, cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches (Mk 7:5). However, according to Hendriksen and Kistemaker, “God’s law nowhere prescribes ritual hand-rinsing for everybody and in connection with every meal.”²¹⁷ Much like the *Mishnah*, churches have traditions and customs that are both written and unwritten. Discovering these can be a challenge, as a multitude of things can be elevated to “custom” status within the church and some things may even gain “sacred custom” status.²¹⁸ It is wise to leave sacred customs alone until the church leader has gained trust

²¹⁵ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 9, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 608.

²¹⁶ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1475.

²¹⁷ Hendriksen and Kistemaker, , vol. 9, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, New Testament Commentary, 608.

²¹⁸ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 47.

throughout the congregation. Customs within the small church can be held by the entire church, a group within the church or individuals. The following avenues of identification have been gleaned from those experienced in Sanilac County cultures and small church customs. The goal in this section is to learn how to recognize and identify small church customs.

Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by astute observation.

Forty percent of the church leaders interviewed stated that their churches have traditions or customs.²¹⁹ Identifying these customs within the small church can save the church leader considerable embarrassment and possible conflict. Some customs can be identified easily even for someone who is minimally observant, but other customs require astute observation techniques, good listening skills, curiosity, and a good friend in the church. Church leaders should remain authentic and mirror God's love and mercy at all times (Mic. 6:8).

A starting place for identifying customs could be with noticing the obvious customs in the church while being careful not to judge too quickly (Rom 14:13). Some things may appear to be customs when they are not. For example, the pulpit has lost its customary standing in many churches. Protestant churches once placed the pulpit in center stage, meaning the Word of God is the center of the church. With changes in architecture, the stool and round table have replaced the pulpit on many platforms.²²⁰ The

²¹⁹ Statistic located on page 65.

²²⁰ M.E. Kern, "Pulpit-Centered Churches," *Ministry International Journal for Church leaders* (June 1941). <http://https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1941/June/pulpit-centered-churches> (accessed January 18, 2013).

pulpit is typically one thing that receives judgment too quickly when looking for customs. It might appear as though the pulpit is a fixed piece of furniture and it may have forty years of ring marks banged into the top but in many of today's protestant churches it is only a place for the church leader to put his notes. Some other obvious customs can include the singing of the doxology, lighting of candles, even bulletins, and announcements. Ergun Caner writes an illustrative experience concerning a young preacher, a change in the Sunday bulletin, and a secret meeting of furious deacons. Six weeks into Caner's serving as associate church leader the senior church leader resigned leaving Caner as interim church leader. A year later, the church was growing with the addition of many new people and programs, to the point that Sunday bulletins were overflowing with announcements. Caner decided, on his own accord, to change the bulletin by removing the order of service allowing more room for announcements. The order of service did not change; it was only left out of the bulletin. Furthermore, a change was made in the usual reading of every announcement to a highlight reel of the week ahead.²²¹ Caner did not know the bulletin and the reading of the announcements were sacred customs. If he had taken time to identify the customs in the church he might not have experienced the fallout from a secret Sunday night meeting of the church leaders.

Other obvious customs in the church might include the type of music, the use of or abstinence from certain musical instruments, and even the order of music within the service. Some churches refuse to use certain instruments for worship,²²² even though, multiple types of instruments are used for worshiping God throughout the Bible. For

²²¹ Ergun Mehmet Caner, *Holier Than Thou* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009), 51-52.

²²² Church leader interview summary, 117.

example, the Bible includes the trumpet (Ps. 150:3), flute (Ps. 150:4), horn (Ps. 98:4-6), harp (Ps. 43:4), lyres (Ps. 33:2), tambourines (Ps. 149:3) cymbals (Ps. 150:1-6), and sistrums (2 Sam. 6:3-5). Another obvious custom can be seen in the Sunday bulletins. If the bulletin's contents are in the same order every Sunday, service order might be a custom. Clothing requirements are yet another obvious custom.²²³ A first time visitor can usually identify this custom with ease. Some of the small churches in Sanilac County have preferences about how members dress. For example, guests who have attended one of the King James Only churches in Sanilac County would understand the men are expected to wear a button down shirt and tie and woman were expected to wear a skirt or dress in order to respect the church's dress code.²²⁴ Dress codes such as demonstrated in by some church leaders appear to go beyond the principle of modest dress found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:2-5. However, these areas do fall into the category of sacred customs.

Most of the obvious customs already listed would fall into the category of noticing "little things." When a church leader notices little things he/she is noticing things somewhat inconsequential or less important, and the church leader's attention to them can be delayed or disregarded. Other items that could easily fall into the "little things" category are, the communion table, the use of microphones, "canned" music, kitchen care, cooking volunteers, and Bibles in the pews. Some interviewees understand that certain churches do not provide Bibles in the pew because they feel it promotes laziness. Other churches place Bibles in the pews to ensure everyone has the correct version and

²²³ Church leader interview summary, 117.

²²⁴ Ibid.

yet others provide Bibles in the event someone needs one during the service.²²⁵ Whatever the case, the presence, or lack of presence of Bibles in the pews can indicate possible customs.

One cannot have a category of little things without including a contrasting category. “Big things” are things that the church leader will want to address at some point but maybe not immediately.²²⁶ A custom in this category might be the church sign. It is sometimes customary for the same person to display sayings on the sign every week. This can be a big thing if that person displays messages like, “ASK ABOUT OUR PRAY AS YOU GO PLAN,” or “OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH THE BLACK FAMILY,” or maybe “JESUS IS THE RIZZLE FOR THE SIZZLE.”²²⁷ These sayings lack tact and the circumstances certainly elevate this custom to a “big thing,” with urgent need for quickly addressing the issue. As stated earlier, almost anything can become a custom, because customs are those things of which people have become accustomed. Examples are the outdated artwork on the church walls, lack of air conditioning in the sanctuary, or even the pews. The second in this list seems like a strange custom but it certainly can be. For example, one church leader was called to a small northern church. On his first Sunday there, he noticed that the sanctuary was uncomfortably warm. Upon inquiring, he was informed that the church has never had air conditioning and if the church fathers did not need it, neither did the current church members. A similar situation often arises about

²²⁵ Church leader interview summary. 119.

²²⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 47.

²²⁷ Google Images, Stupid Church Signs, http://https://www.google.com/search?q=stupid+church+signs&hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=aFr&tbo=u&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=mbQBUa7-CZC-9gT_7oGoDw&ved=0CEAQsAQ&biw=1752&bih=928 (accessed January 24, 2013).

pews; they often are in need of recovering, but everyone likes the way the old pews feel. Not only are the church members accustomed to the feel of the pew but they also have their customary seating arrangement.²²⁸

The air conditioner and the pews are both “big things” because they affect guests and the comfort of visitors. In today’s age of comfort, one cannot expect a visitor to become a member when they do not feel comfortable. Parking spots can also become customs in the “big thing” category. Much like where the members sit inside the building, members park in the same spot every week outside the building. Pews and parking places are closely related. In Sanilac County, regular church members have their own self-assigned pew and self-assigned parking place.²²⁹ A visitor parking in a member’s parking place causes problems. A low rumble of complaining begins as everyone discusses who the visitor was that “messed-up” the parking lot. If a visitor were to sit in a member’s pew, keeping them from their self-appointed spot, the entire church membership would stare at the visitor, displaying glairs, grumbles, and even pointing fingers.²³⁰ The visitor might think he/she were Rosa Parks sitting in the wrong place on the bus.

Along with “little things” and “big things,” a third category is “insignificant things.” “Insignificant things could be an up-to-date bulletin board, missionary pictures on display or tracts in the foyer for anyone’s use. Keep in mind that even insignificant things can be a sacred custom. A church leader was decorating for a holiday, however in the process; he removed the tract holder from the wall. The next Sunday a deacon grew

²²⁸ Church leader interview summary, 108.

²²⁹ Ibid., 113.

²³⁰ Ibid., 121.

upset when he realized the tracts were not readily accessible. For that deacon the display of tracts was a sacred custom, however for most people it would have been a temporary inconvenience at best. Astute observation is imperative for identifying customs and avoiding conflict.²³¹

Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by listening.

Returning to Nicodemus' dialogue with Jesus, as introduced in Section I, the dialogue turns to monologue, as the Apostle John quotes Jesus saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen..." (Jn. 3:11). The thing that Jesus knows and testifies of is, of course, heaven, but certainly, the statement is true in a broader view. Jesus is not the only one who speaks of what he knows and testifies of what he has seen. This is a basic tenet of communication. People speak about themselves and often speak of others and a listening ear is beneficial. While gossiping is sin (Rom. 1:29-30), listening without repeating what is heard is a valuable form of gathering useful information. People often talk about other people's customs that they find absurd. A wonderful example of this was given during the interviews. During the worship service some churches have a time called "greet your neighbor." This involves greeting others in the form of a handshake, hug, a wave, and a verbal notation. To some, this action is a necessary custom that cannot be missed. However, to others, this is a waste of church time and should never be part of the worship service. The point is that a certain amount of information about this custom was relayed during the interview

²³¹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 22-23.

because the church leader found the custom absurd.²³² These types of things are often told to church leaders and must be kept in confidence.

A church leader can identify customs by listening to people in the same manner that he/she can understand culture. People love to talk about themselves. It does not take much persuasion for someone to ramble on about childhood, college days, their children, their spouse, and their favorite things to do and eat. For example, this researcher/church leader was in a Sanilac County Wal-Mart sitting on the bench outside the pharmacy waiting for his son's prescription and an elderly man sat down next to him. This man was a complete stranger. This researcher/church leader engaged in his favorite pastime — visiting. He began a conversation with the stranger by asking, "How are you doing?" The question was asked with genuine concern that he could easily perceive. Two hours and fifteen minutes later, this researcher/church leader knew what seemed like nearly everything about this World War II veteran. This researcher learned how he flew planes in the war and worked as a tool and die maker for forty-some years. He also learned that the man's bride of fifty-two years had just passed away the previous month and at the funeral, they played her favorite hymn, "In The Garden" by Charles Austin Miles (1912). The women of the church prepared a meal for the funeral party and the family was blessed with the leftover food. He said his church always gave the leftover food to the grieving family. A short conversation with a stranger revealed some of the customs within the man's church. Some of those customs included, favorite hymn singing at funerals, food preparation for the funeral party, and leftovers for the grieving family.

²³² Church leader interview summary, 121-122.

Listening is a simple and effective tool for assisting in the understanding of church customs.

Identify small church customs in Sanilac County through curiosity.

Curiosity is a basic emotion that can bring both positive and negative results. Matthew 8:28-34 is an example of a negative result of curiosity. Two demon-possessed men were near the city of Gadarenes. They were curious as to what Jesus, the Son of God, was doing walking by so they yelled at him and asked “Have You come here to torment us before the time” (Matt.8:29). The demon’s curiosity was their demise as Jesus cast them into the swine and they immediately ran into the water and drowned (Matt. 8:32). Contrary to this account is the account of Paul at Mars’ Hill in Athens, recorded in Acts chapter seventeen verses sixteen through thirty-four. Paul writes that the philosophers took him to Mars’ Hill because they were curious about the new doctrine he was teaching. Their curiosity afforded Paul the opportunity to present the Gospel message and resulted in some of the men believing on Christ for salvation (Acts 17:34). In this instance, the philosopher’s curiosity brought a positive result for some as they found new life.

Sometimes curiosity is helpful. A curious church leader who contacts a previous church leader and asks about the church and the congregation has the opportunity to learn from a unique perspective. This information provides invaluable insight. Previous church leaders might have a perspective that can help a new church leader see more clearly certain situations in the church. He/she can inform the new church leader of problems that arose during the previous tenure. He/she can also discuss the controlling families, if there were any. Information about any matriarch or patriarch is also invaluable. This

information comes from a primary source, therefore carries significant weight in the investigation process. One must also consider the negative aspect of curiosity while contacting a previous church leader. Church leaders often leave with negative feelings toward the congregation. Therefore, the accounts and advice could be skewed by hurt and disappointment.

Just as curiosity can be helpful, it can also bring problems. While asking the previous church leader about the congregation, inquiring about the motives and/or reasons the previous leader left could be beneficial.²³³ His/her reasons will differ from the story relayed by the congregation. Determining the truth from the church board's perspective and comparing that with the previous church leader's view offers insight into the relationship between the congregation and the previous church leader. While information is important, hearsay can be detrimental and can reflect poorly on the members of the congregation.²³⁴

Curiosity can masquerade as fun and assist in building relationships. For example, storytelling sounds childish, but is wonderful for the curious church leader to gather information and strengthen relationships. A gathering of the church leaders and the influential people in the sanctuary for a time of reminiscing and sharing can be a precious time of learning.²³⁵ Stories of how God has carried the church through difficult times and how he has blessed with hope and guidance expose sensitivity and vulnerability. Discussions about former church leaders, members, and families who have influenced the

²³³ Church leader interview summary, 113.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 54.

church bring further benefit. The church leader's primary role in this activity is mediator and perhaps a sleuth. The goal is to identify corporate, small group, individual, and sacred customs. As the church leader guides the conversation, argument can be avoided, while also encouraging discussion that reveals various sides of each story, and indirectly revealing conflict. New church leaders are wise to discern the tone of the conversations and tactfully change the subject when conflict is discerned either between family members or between members of the church. This is a time of building unity and enhancing friendships.

Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by looking in the mirror.

It is important for a church leader to know what he or she considers as corporate customs. Corporate customs are those customs that congregations hold as a group. A list of these assists church leaders in recognizing corporate customs within their current church. The same is true of personal and sacred customs. Listing each of the will reveal a great deal about one's self. Listing customs from the past and from the present provides an avenue for comparison to view change on various aspects of the church. Often a church leader will find his/her customs will change slightly when moving to a new church. There will be a tendency to adapt customs from a current church while dismissing customs from previous tenures. It is easier for the church leader to change to match the congregation than for the church leader to attempt to change the congregation to match his or her customs. Sacred customs for church leaders rarely change because most of these are grounded in solid biblical exegesis. Self-evaluation is necessary for a church leader's success as he/she strives to remain faithful to the call of Christ.

Identify small church customs in Sanilac County by making small changes.

There have been many illustrations and suggestions included in this section for aiding church leaders in identifying the customs within the church. However, making small changes is the only true way to know how attached the congregation or a congregational member is to a particular custom.²³⁶ There is a process for making changes in a small church in Sanilac County. One church leader suggested that small church members in Sanilac County are traditional, which means they do not like change. Other Sanilac County church leaders said that their congregations do well with little to no change.²³⁷ Another church leader said that their congregation is open to change, for the correct reasons.²³⁸ Yet others said that their congregation is agreeable to change, however they have not changed anything in years.²³⁹ Moreover, some other Sanilac County church leaders said that they have made multiple changes over the last few years.²⁴⁰ In every case, the church leaders suggested that change is best received when the church leader is patient, loves the congregation, and builds strong relationships.²⁴¹

All changes must begin with prayer. “Without prayer, headship loses its validity, vitality, and influence. Prayer is the means by which God works through the individual to challenge and affect people.”²⁴² Jesus is the strength and power for those who follow him

²³⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 47.

²³⁷ Church leader interview summaries, 117, 119.

²³⁸ Ibid., 115.

²³⁹ Ibid., 109, 133

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 123, 127.

²⁴¹ Results from chart on page 68.

²⁴² Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 108.

(Ps 46:1). As followers of Jesus, church leaders receive wisdom and guidance when they ask in the name of Jesus (Js 1:5). Wisdom and guidance does not always mean making the correct decision. However, seeking God's will brings his favor, as he has promised to bless his servants (Lk 11:38). Testing the reaction of the congregation by changing something requires caution and is not approachable without God's guidance. Some may question why change is necessary, as they strive to maintain the status quo. However, God calls all of his people to change (Phil. 1:6).

God's calling of church leaders is grounded in change, as they understand proper Christian growth. Paul states in Colossians chapter three, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth...and beloved, put on..." showing the salvation given by Jesus Christ brings about change or what the Apostle Paul refers to as the "new man." The "old man" is put to death and the "new man" emerges thus indentifying Christ as an agent of change. God continues to change his children as they progress in sanctification or become more holy. This progression brings followers closer to Jesus' likeness and takes them away further from worldly views. Church leaders may desire growth for their congregation sometimes forcing change in hopes of advancing spiritual and numerical growth. A more productive and sensitive option is to patiently pray for change and wait on God's direction. It may take years but God knows change is necessary. Killen states about the necessity of change:

Leadership through change can be crucial for many churches. Many small membership churches need to make important changes in their ways of doing things in order to survive and to minister effectively in a changing world. Most small membership churches resist change. Only a church leader who has won the trust of the congregation through building good church pastoral relationships will have any chance to lead the churches through the needed changes.

Pastoral relationship also prepare the way for prophetic ministries. In every generation, there are some big issues that God wants preachers to talk about even though the congregations don't want to hear about them. That is part of the way God works through the church to change the world.²⁴³

If God uses church leaders to change the world through the church, learning how to make change is vital and the process begins with prayer.²⁴⁴ The next step is letting the grace of God guide the process. Choosing an item to change is a significant decision. Two church leaders during their interviews suggested making the most crucial changes first, while Richard Griffin suggests beginning change with the most basic issues.²⁴⁵ Certainly, address extremely crucial change first. However, most changes are not extremely crucial. They are merely beneficial and a church leader must decide which are more beneficial. The church leader must also decide how the change will affect the congregation and ultimately the mission of the church.

Sometimes the church's mission and the church leader's understanding of the church's mission are misaligned.²⁴⁶ Communication is the best policy to ensure everyone understands the direction the church should move. After the needed change is discussed it is time to address the congregation. The congregation will appreciate advance notice of the proposed changes, after which make the changes and wait for the fallout, as someone is going to complain. Once again, James states, "Establish your hearts" (Jm. 5:8).

²⁴³ Killen, *Church Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 8-9.

²⁴⁴ Church leader interview summary, 108.

²⁴⁵ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 50.

²⁴⁶ Church leader interview summary, 121.

Therefore, stand firm in grace armed with mercy and love for each one who complains. Love them until they stop complaining.

This process sounds like it could happen in a few months or a few years, however most successful small church leaders serve for decades before making any substantial changes.²⁴⁷ Sanilac County church leaders exemplify this statement. They have dedicated their lives to slowly moving forward. Actually, the current church leaders might not even see the changes, but they are working towards them nonetheless.

²⁴⁷ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 33.

SECTION III

HOW CAN CHURCH LEADERS ADAPT TO THE CUSTOMS AND CULTURES WITHIN THE SMALL CHURCH IN SANILAC COUNTY?

Introduction

It affords a church leader little benefit to put forth the effort involved in understanding small church culture and identifying the customs in the small church if adaption to the geographical area is not intended. “The most effective rural church leaders appreciate and understand the [lifeways] of the people they pastor.”²⁴⁸ Adapting to the customs and culture of the small church is the best way to demonstrate love for a congregation and love is vital for successful church leaders in Sanilac County.²⁴⁹

How can church leaders adapt to the customs and cultures within the small church in Sanilac County?

Small churches in Sanilac County will welcome anyone, but accepting someone as a leader is not typical in a short period.²⁵⁰ Of the fifteen church leaders interviewed for this workshop, the shortest tenure was six years.²⁵¹ Church leaders in Sanilac County

²⁴⁸ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 33

²⁴⁹ Church leader interview summary, 130.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 121.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 107.

have a vision for the area and they intend on seeing that vision through because they love the people in their county. Even though the shortest tenure at one church is six years, several of the church leaders interviewed have served at multiple churches in Sanilac County, greatly multiplying their experience as a small church leader in the county.²⁵²

Since the majority of the church leaders interviewed originated from Sanilac County, for them cultural adaptation was not necessary. However, those who are transplants experienced difficulties acclimating.²⁵³ Church leaders who desire to be effective in a Sanilac County small church must plan to stay, considering, short tenures are seemingly unproductive in Sanilac County. They should also be authentic or genuine and show flexibility, accept and use the cultural idiosyncrasies of Sanilac County, and show love. Lastly, church leaders must discover that large churches and big city methods are not accepted in Sanilac County.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, another church leader revealed that the locals have a strong distaste for those who attempt to bring their “city ways” to Sanilac County; they are called “City-its.” This is a nickname used throughout the county and originates from combining the words “city” and “idiot(s).” Right or wrong, it is Sanilac County.²⁵⁵

²⁵² Church leader interviews summaries, 113, 131, 127.

²⁵³ Ibid., 121.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 117.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 127.

Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by planning to stay for the duration.

If a church leader wishes to be successful in Sanilac County he/she plans to stay in Sanilac County for a long time. The small churches in this county are not stepping-stones or layovers before arriving at a desired destination. It takes many years to develop the trust and understanding needed to identify with the people and culture of rural America.²⁵⁶ The same is true of pastoring in Sanilac County.²⁵⁷

Staying for the duration means changing one's self. Church leaders, like most people not from Sanilac County, behave very different from Sanilac County natives. Staying in this county means a behavioral adjustment is beneficial and necessary. Some church leaders advised a new church leader to begin emulating a Sanilac County native by frequenting a coffee shop.²⁵⁸ That does not mean there are an abundance of Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts. However, almost every party store has a coffee pot where the locals gather in the morning before starting work. Much like Floyd's Barbershop in the Andy Griffith show, where a group of men would frequent the barbershop, not for coffee, but to visit. This is the idea behind the local party store. A party store is not a place that sells party decorations or a place to go for a party. It is Sanilac County's name for a convenience store, for example 7-Eleven without the gas pumps or Kwik-E-Mart. Some would say that most of Sanilac County's problems have been solved in the coffee shop. Also noticing the use of different names for the store is important. Sanilac County's culture dictates the party store is called the coffee shop in the morning and the rest of the

²⁵⁶ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 33

²⁵⁷ Church leader interview summary, 121.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 128, 109, 107.

day it is called a party store. Another church leader added that for some people it is called the beer store in the evening time.²⁵⁹

Integrating into the coffee shop society is not easy. For example, the regular crowd is standing around drinking coffee and visiting. A man working in the area, not part of the regular coffee crowd, who walks in for his morning coffee will quickly notice everyone in the entire place stops talking and there will be complete silence. Everyone stares at the man, not saying a word, until the door opens for the man to leave, at which time he can hear the men begin to talk about him as the door closes. It is quite an unnerving experience.²⁶⁰ However, if the same man goes into the coffee shop every morning and takes a few minutes to visit each day, eventually the regulars will converse with him. After a year or so, the man will be considered a “regular” with all the rights there in, which include the opportunity to stay and build relationships and the occasion to evangelize (Matt. 28:18-20).

Women church leaders will have a slightly different experience; again, it is Sanilac County culture. The rules are different for a woman to be accepted into the coffee shop. There is a dress code, and dress clothes are not acceptable. Jeans, work boots, and any kind of shirt are sufficient. In addition, women should expect a different experience than a man on the first morning’s visit to the coffee shop. She is advised by one of the interviewed church leaders to choose which coffee shop to “join” and stop in for a cup, but do not plan to stay that first day.²⁶¹ In addition, the ritual is somewhat different for a

²⁵⁹ Church leader interview summary, 127.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 107.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 128.

woman. When she exits the store, the regulars will only watch her intently, and they do not talk about her. What women do not know is that men remain silent for a few moments after a woman exits as if they are savoring the moment. After the initial ritual on the first day, a woman who dresses the part in jeans and work boots will be accepted as a regular. She will be treated as “one of the guys” and is not expected to follow any of the rituals. This is Sanilac County’s “rite of passage” for new comers and is well worth the time and embarrassment. Coffee shops are scattered around the county and are not limited to party stores. They are also in the local parts store, mechanic shops, gas stations, and so on. A church leader who does not belong to one of these nonofficial social clubs will limit his or her success for cultural integration according to a local interviewed pastor.²⁶²

Staying in Sanilac County also means that November fifteenth is a holiday. On the opening day of regular white-tailed deer hunting season, November fifteenth, most schools and many businesses are closed. The hunting church leader fits in well, but just as the coffee shop has rules, hunting has rules as well, and a church leader would do well to know them. Becoming a hunter does not necessarily demonstrate a church leader’s plan to remain in the county. However, knowing about hunting and respecting the sport is a necessity. Small church members expect the occasional hunting illustration from the pulpit and it assists them in feeling as if their church leader belongs.²⁶³

Planning to stay in Sanilac County means that, soft drinks are no longer called “soda,” “coke,” or a “soft drink” they are called “pop.” In addition, complaining about the weather is expected. Only outsiders love the weather. The locals always say that it is

²⁶² Church leader interview summary, 107.

²⁶³ Ibid., 119.

too cold or too hot. Even on beautiful seventy degree days it is too cloudy, humid, windy, sunny, or not breezy enough. In Sanilac County, this is considered conversing, not complaining. Poor cell phone service and extremely slow internet is also expected in Sanilac County, so discussions about these items are useless.

Turning from county culture to specific small church culture in Sanilac County, a church leader staying for the duration takes the time to visit the congregation. “Most laypeople in small membership churches want to have a personal relationship with their church leader. They want to know that their church leader knows them and cares about them and can be called on to minister to them.”²⁶⁴ One church leader explained that some of the membership will decline multiple visitation attempts, however, one should not take “no” for an answer.²⁶⁵ Visiting with caution is advised. Besides visiting, the members of a small church congregation know the church leader plans to stay when they hear an increasing amount of local language and illustrations from the pulpit. A church leader who says “y’all” instead of “yous guys” and uses public transport illustrations instead of yesterday’s fishing story is sending the message that he/she is not planning to stay long.²⁶⁶ Adapt to the customs and culture by making personal changes and plan to stay.

Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by being authentic and flexible.

It is imperative to return once again to an illustration about the harvest. Jesus tells a parable in Matthew chapter thirteen beginning in verse twenty-four. Jesus, talking about

²⁶⁴ Killen, *Church Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, 3.

²⁶⁵ Church leader interview summary, 126.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 133.

the kingdom of heaven again relates to the harvest of crops. The farmers sowed quality wheat seed and his enemy, under the cover of darkness, sowed weeds among the wheat. The farmer allowed the wheat and weeds to exist together with the intention of separating them at harvest time. During the harvest, the farmer will gather the weeds and burn them while gathering the wheat for storage in the barn. In this parable, the wheat represents authentic Christians and the weeds inauthentic. The authentic Christians are gathered together in heaven while everyone else suffers destruction. Jesus stresses in this parable the necessity to be authentic Christians. God's people are not called to be fake, put on airs, or display actions of the unsaved (Col. 3:9).

In the process of making personal changes in order to integrate into the culture, a church leader can lose his or her authenticity. However, true authenticity cannot be stressed enough. People can tell fake from authentic with little effort. They will also be willing to accept a church leader who does not fit the cultural norm. For example, if a church leader does not drink coffee, he or she is still accepted in the coffee shops as long as the church leader is drinking something. The same is true inside the church. Small church members can accept a church leader who is attempting to learn and adapt to the culture. However, they will also reject a church leader who is not making an honest attempt. One does not have to understand and/or participate in all of the cultural nuances of Sanilac County or the county's small churches but one should try out of love for God's people.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Church leader interview summary, 130.

One church leader believes that what church members are really looking for is flexibility.²⁶⁸ In Sanilac County, rigid church leaders rarely have long tenures. The small church members do not want someone to dictate rules and give orders; they react well to church leaders who show mercy and mutual respect. Some of the church leaders interviewed for this workshop revealed that they have the power to make decisions followed by the appropriate changes.²⁶⁹ However, they frequently ask the church members for their opinion before making decisions. This shows flexibility in leadership relaying a sense of equality and respect. Pastors stand with the church leaders not above them.²⁷⁰ While integrating is important, it is equally important to remain authentic and be flexible.

Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by embracing the local small church culture.

County culture is apparent within Sanilac County's small churches. However, each small church also has its own culture. To adapt to the culture of the small church it is first necessary to understand the characteristics of the small church. These will come from Glenn Daman's book *Shepherding the Small Church*:

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 114.

²⁶⁹ Church leader interview summaries, 115, 118, 124, 135.

²⁷⁰ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 33

Character 1: The small church is relationally driven.

“Perhaps the single most important distinctive of the small church is that it is relationally rather than program driven.”²⁷¹ Congregational relations dictate church leadership and influence. In general, the most influential church member of the small church is the congregational leader, not necessarily the pastor. This person is usually the head of the central congregational family. Relational responses dictate church programs and ministry activities. If a program will negatively affect the relationships within the church, the program suffers. Poor performance is often overlooked in the small church to preserve relationships.²⁷² These examples are generalities, as some Sanilac County church leaders interviewed expressed that the pastor is the leader of the church.²⁷³

Characteristic 2: The small church works through informal channels.

Coffee shops and parking lots are two typical places for decision making within the small church.²⁷⁴ The decisions are based on maintaining and improving fellowship. Formal business meetings are not important, as the small church works through social gatherings. One interviewed church leader believes that a Sanilac County church leader would do well to carry the month’s business notes to the fellowship time before or after church.²⁷⁵ An informal meeting such as this sets the congregation at ease while completing all of the church business with little dispute. The church leader who is

²⁷¹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 43.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Church leader interviews summaries, 118, 129.

²⁷⁴ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 44.

²⁷⁵ Church leader interview summary, 133.

accustomed to weekly staff or board meetings might consider a less formal approach while in Sanilac County.²⁷⁶

Characteristic 3: The small church works as a whole.

Business meetings during fellowship before or after church is a valid time because everyone in the small church desires to be involved in the decision making process. The church makes the decisions rather than an appointed board or dedicated church leader. The church leader does not set the vision within the small church. Rather, the church leader is the facilitator of the vision that originated from the congregation.²⁷⁷ Vision is also guided by the desire to preserve fellowship and strengthen relationships. Therefore, a church leader's desire for church growth brings concern from the congregation, as it threatens the church vision of unity. Nevertheless, the church leader does much to shape the vision of the church through preaching and teaching.

Characteristic 4: Power and authority reside in the laity rather than the church leader.

“While the church leader may retain the title, the power of the church belongs to the people who have built and operated the church for generations.”²⁷⁸ As stated in previous sections, the church leader must concentrate on building relationships and shepherding the congregation rather than attempting to be an administrator. Small church members are typically business owners and farmers who have independent attitudes. Church leaders are servant leaders and it is important to allow people to take the initiative

²⁷⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 44.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 45.

while guiding with a servant's heart.²⁷⁹ Most Sanilac County church leaders have the authority and power to manage the church. Nevertheless, out of respect for the congregational leaders the church leader frequently requests their opinions.²⁸⁰

Characteristic 5: The small church relates as a family.

It is often difficult to gain acceptance into a family. Sometimes in-laws are never accepted as full-fledged members and the small church is much the same. "If you ask any small church what their community strength is, they probably will say it is their friendliness. Yet, if you ask people who attend for the first time what they disliked about their visit, they may respond that the church lacked personal warmth."²⁸¹ Small church members feel complete with those who already attend, and may feel the risk of accepting an outsider is too great. An outsider could cause imbalance and perhaps unwanted change. For this reason, small churches do not feel the need for evangelism. Since pastors/church leaders have little to no authority within the church, the church remains small as its members continue to reject newcomers by being impersonal.²⁸² New comers will find small churches in Sanilac County warm and friendly. However, outreach is minimal, infrequent, localized, and evangelism is important but not urgent for most.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 45.

²⁸⁰ Church leader interview summary, 116.

²⁸¹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 45.

²⁸² Ibid., 45.

²⁸³ Statistics on page 65.

Characteristic 6: Communication occurs through the grape vine.

Everyone talks about everything, but a church leader would do well to not assume that everyone knows everything. Congregations expect the church leader to inform them personally about current news events and activities. The smaller the church is, the more people talk. Church leaders should ensure that they inform the congregation of new events before they hear it through the grape vine.²⁸⁴ The grape vine also extends to family members outside the church. Therefore, a church leader must speak carefully, even in private. The best grape vine communication in Sanilac County's small churches is the prayer chain. There is no better way to get the word out to everyone in the church.²⁸⁵

Characteristic 7: Traditions and heritage undergird the structure, ministry, and culture.

Tradition and custom are interchangeable terms. Moreover, section II covers customs extensively. Understand how those customs work as an integral part of the church is necessary. "The leaders need to identify these sacred cows, discern the reasons they are important, and address needs for change sensitively."²⁸⁶ Sacred cows are synonymous with sacred customs. Addressing change is difficult without first identifying these customs. Customs are grounded in history. Church members hold on to customs because their ancestors did, which acts as preservation of their memory. One would do well to remember that sacred customs could vary in degree of importance. One would

²⁸⁴ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 46.

²⁸⁵ Church leader interview summary, 109.

²⁸⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 47.

also do well to choose to battlegrounds wisely with love and grace especially when dealing with sacred customs.²⁸⁷

Characteristic 8: The church functions and worships intergenerationally.

Worship time is for the family in the small church. Programs such as, children's church, and nursery/child care are minimal in the small church. Since the family unit takes precedence in the small church, it is easy to understand why most small churches insist on having activities for all ages on Sunday and Wednesday night. Offering an adult Bible study without a children's program fails to promote family unity because it causes family separation.²⁸⁸

Characteristic 9: The focus is upon people rather than performance.

This researcher, as a young boy wiggled in his seat while an elderly woman played the piano and sang her monthly special. The young boy asked his mother why they let that old woman sing when she sounds horrible. The mother did not know the answer or the young boy asked the question too loud because those sitting around were smiling and even chuckling a little. The answer to the young boy's question is that people are more important than performance. Since the small church is like a family, people are willing to sit through a poor performance instead of hurting the person's feelings by keeping them from participating. It is also for this reason that the small church has ill-suited volunteers serving in almost every area of the church. Members usually serve

²⁸⁷ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 47.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 47.

where there is a need, and seldom serve in the area where they are best suited. Task oriented church leaders would do well to adapt in order to develop their congregation to function in the areas of need instead of administering and organizing them into the activities best suiting their gifts.²⁸⁹

Characteristic 10: There is a place for everyone and everyone has a place.

Involvement is important to small church members. They understand that being involved promotes a feeling of being needed and loved. Church involvement also means a place to belong. Previously an illustration was used about a visitor who sat in a regular church member's seat, where each member has a place and they do not venture far from their comfort zone. This means that small church members sit in the same place on the same pew every Sunday. They also bring the same dish to potluck dinners, teach the same lessons year after year in Sunday School, and like to sing the same hymns on a rotation basis. It is important for small church leaders to realize the significance of finding a place for those members to serve. If a job does not exist for a member, create one.²⁹⁰

Characteristic 11: The small church values relatives.

"Interrelatedness has a tremendous impact in the life of the congregation. Key leadership positions are often filled according to bloodlines."²⁹¹ Traditionally, the most influential family controls primary leadership positions, and maintains those positions

²⁸⁹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 48.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 48-49.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 48-49.

until a younger family member is suited to rotate leadership.²⁹² Nepotism rules small churches in Sanilac County. Church leaders are advised to adapt appropriately, in love and with grace.

Characteristic 12: The small church values generalists.

Small church members can do a variety of different jobs. The church leader is also often expected to do more than preach. The small church leader has the responsibility of learning what is expected by the congregation and communicating to them what he or she is willing to do within their job description. Some church leaders in Sanilac County do little in the form of church repairs or landscaping, however, others are very active in these areas. For example, one church leader takes care of the yard work, cleaning, plumbing, painting, and all other minor repairs for the church,²⁹³ whereas another church leader is not responsible for any of these tasks in his church.²⁹⁴ In Sanilac County, the church leader's job description varies by congregation and the church leader is expected to be willing to adapt to the church's needs.²⁹⁵

Characteristic 13: The small church has its own calendar and timetable.

The timetable of a small church is set by the schedule of the immediate community. Rural small churches in Sanilac County adjust their schedules according to

²⁹² Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 48-49.

²⁹³ Church leader interview summary, 113.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

the seasons, as farmers are busy during certain times of the year.²⁹⁶ They often adjust their schedules according to seasons because of the extreme winters in Sanilac County. Churches do little in the wintertime with the exception of Christmas. Church leaders in Sanilac County, who learn to adapt their schedules to a local table, are closer to successful integration.²⁹⁷

Characteristic 14: In the small church, people give.

This is a remarkable principle that holds true for Sanilac County. Even though the downturn of the auto industry closed most of the factories in the county and many people lost their jobs, they continue to give. According to one church leader, small church members will not typically give more than is needed, but will meet the needs of the church on a regular basis with their money, time and abilities.²⁹⁸ Moreover, ten percent is not generally a standard in the small Sanilac County church (Matt. 23:23), as giving is based on the needs of the church. Church leaders would do well to know this and adapt their styles, as they encourage giving in a way that encourages church members to provide for the needs of the church and meet biblical principles.²⁹⁹ Jesus said in Matthew chapter twenty-three and verse twenty-three, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.” Jesus explains that moral principles support tithing.

²⁹⁶ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 50.; View statistical chart on page 63.

²⁹⁷ Church leader interview summary, 121.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁹⁹ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 51.

These principles provide a foundation for tithing and Sanilac County church leaders would do well in teaching these principles to their congregations.

Understanding the characteristics of the small church promotes a proper view of ministry. It also allows church leaders to place appropriate emphasis while addressing the needs of the congregation. Understanding the importance of family is vital to a church leader who has a desire to be effective in Sanilac County. Church leaders have the opportunity to adapt their current leadership style to one that leads the small church toward health. Small churches in Sanilac County understand and demonstrate the command to love is universal (Col. 3:14), as is God's desire for unity (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by learning to love the people.

Newspaper columnist and minister George Crane tells of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. "I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me."

Dr. Crane suggested an ingenious plan "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him." With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful, beautiful. Will he ever be surprised!" And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if." For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing. When she didn't return, Crane called. "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?"

"Divorce?" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him." Her actions had changed her feelings. Motion resulted in emotion.

The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds.³⁰⁰

Much like this illustration, church leaders often find themselves with difficult decisions. One of the most agonizing decisions for a church leader is choosing to love his or her congregation. Commanded to love by Christ (John 13:34), he or she is expected to demonstrate a love for everyone in the same way Christ loved (Eph. 5:2). Even though love is commanded, demonstrated and is evidence of spiritual fruit, (Gal 5:22) it remains one of the most difficult aspects of a church leader's job.

The numerous scriptures written on the subject of relational love prove that loving some people is more challenging than loving others (1 Cor. 13:4-7, 1 Thess. 4:9, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:21, Rom. 12:10, 2 Pet. 1:7, 1 Tim. 1:5). It also proves that love is a choice not grounded in emotions. For example, Jesus said in Matthew 22:39, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." He calls this the second great commandment, and does not provide room for emotional variations. Jesus does not say, love your neighbor only when one feels like it. In the same respect, church leaders are to love the members of their church without condition, even those who are difficult to love.

In the illustration above, the wife chose to love her husband and she acted upon that decision. One's entire perspective changes when a church leader chooses to love his or her church members. Adapting to the situation by choosing to love will promote a change of attitudes and advance unity amongst the entire congregation. Small churches are built on principles of family and relationships; the basis for each is love. The Apostle Paul states, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all

³⁰⁰ J. Allen Petersen, *Love* (n.p.: Seminary.com, n.d.), <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/l/love.htm> (accessed January 21, 2013).

knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my good to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2-3). Effective church leaders in Sanilac County’s small churches rely on love because they live and believe 1 Corinthians 16:14, “Let all that you do be done with love.” Church leaders, “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God, Honor the king” (1 Pet. 2:17).

Church leaders can adapt to a small church in Sanilac County by discovering that “Bigger is not always Better.”

This workshop is about Sanilac County, so “Bigger is not always Better” cannot refer to trucks or tractors. The tractors in this county were at one time not much bigger than a minivan. However, now they compete in size with a locomotive and have tank-like capabilities with on-board Global Positioning Satellites, flat screen televisions, heat and air conditioning, and tank treads. Trucks in Sanilac County are not much different with their lift kits and 42-inch Super Swamper tires, four wheel drive, and snowplow blades. It seems as though many in Sanilac County are moving to “Bigger.” There is a new Wal-Mart and a Tractor Supply in Sandusky the county seat, the airport added more hangers and runway space, and new boat docks are added every year in the marinas. The Pioneer Sugar Company has grown “Bigger” since the farmers’ co-operative bought it a few years ago. So if “Bigger is Better” for these things why is that not the case for churches in Sanilac County?

It is normal for church leaders to desire and encourage church growth. Church leaders with a higher religious education are taught how to evangelize a community and

how to add members to their church.³⁰¹ Those church leaders who do not understand the customs and culture of the small rural church will eventually fight the congregation with his/her ideas of change.³⁰² Most church leaders who do not understand the small rural church's definition of effectiveness will also attempt to prove their worth by endeavoring to make the church grow. In small churches in Sanilac County, "Bigger is not always Better." Too many people on Sunday morning reduces fellowship time, too many teens on Wednesday night gives them opportunity to be unruly, and too many kids at Kid's Club or Vacation Bible School means someone's child is not getting the attention they need. The family atmosphere is threatened when the church becomes too large.³⁰³ A bigger congregation means less one-on-one time with the church leader, and as stated earlier, church members need time with their church leader.

Church leaders who view effectiveness by the size of their congregation and the number of staff members are advised to change their views if their goal is to survive and thrive in Sanilac County's small churches. Adapting a "smaller is better" attitude to one's philosophy of ministry will assist in developing a more appropriate small church Sanilac County worldview. The church leaders in Sanilac County have been successful because they took the time to understand the culture, identify the customs and adapt to a small rural church mentality of relationships, family and love.

³⁰¹ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 28-29.

³⁰² Ibid., 48-49.

³⁰³ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 46.

SECTION IV

HOW CAN CHURCH LEADES GAUGE THEIR SUCCESS WITHIN THE SMALL CHURCH IN SANILAC COUNTY?

Introduction

Church leaders are not called to be successful by men's standards. They are called to be faithful by God's standards (1 Cor. 4:2). Small church leaders will frequently feel discouraged because they believe that little work for the kingdom is actually being accomplished. They see minor change in both people's lives and in the church as a whole. However, church leaders "need to recognize smallness not as a deficit or a deficiency, but as a virtue."³⁰⁴ The purpose of the small church is to maintain a loving relationship with each other while evangelizing the community through a God honoring lifestyle.

Understanding community and church culture and identifying every church custom does not guarantee a church leader's ability to bring change to a congregation. A church leader may labor his or her entire career and never observe significant spiritual or numerical change within their congregation. This is not failure. "Commit these things to faithful men," means for church leaders to teach the Gospel of Christ to those who will

³⁰⁴ Pappas, ed, *Inside the Small Church*, 118.

faithfully teach others. Two things can be said of small church congregations: that they are faithful and they teach Christ.

How can church leaders gauge their success within the small church in Sanilac County?

Success for small church leaders in Sanilac County is gauged by faithfulness.

Church leaders must be faithful to God in his/her actions, language, and finances. He/she has the responsibility to serve God well in all areas of life. A church leader has the responsibility to remain faithful to his/her family and church, using proper doctrine and setting the example in worship. Remaining faithful to the Word and in prayer are imperative, as is faithfulness to evangelism. Small church leaders are advised to keep a positive outlook and consider those within his/her circle of influence.³⁰⁵

Church leaders must remain faithful to God.

Every community and small church has its own culture. It may be similar to culture described in this workshop, or it may be entirely different. However, certain characteristics within that culture to integrate properly are essential.³⁰⁶ Integration does not mean compromise of Christian values. God expects his leaders to be above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2). They are held to a higher standard (Jam. 3:1) and are to remain faithful through multiple circumstances (Rev. 2:10). Sometimes God calls his servants to bi-vocational ministry, which means that some church leaders serve a church part-time and have secular part-time employment. These can be difficult circumstances, taxing one's

³⁰⁵ Claude v King, and Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann, *Concentric Circles of Concern* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 19-20.

³⁰⁶ Church leader interview summary, 127.

faith as Ministry is not part-time. The job search ad might announce that a church is looking for a part-time church leader or a part-time youth church leader. However, part-time ministry does not exist, because when God calls someone to ministry, it is full-time. When God delivers life's challenges, one can stand faithful in the promise that God will provide the strength to complete the task (Col. 1:9-11).

Difficult times challenge church leaders to control their emotions and their tongues. A church leader in Sanilac County was on his bi-weekly golf outing with several other church leaders and things were not going well. He told his friends about some of the issues that came about in the last few days. They listened intently as they reached the sixth hole. Looking for an opportunity to offer consolation, they teed up their golf balls in turn. It was the distraught church leader's turn; he teed up his golf ball, swung, and drove it right into the woods on the left of the fairway. He spoke multiple profanities surprising everyone. Church leaders should be consistent in faithfulness not only in deeds, but also in words (Col. 3:17).³⁰⁷

Lastly, church leaders should be faithful to God through their finances (1 Tim. 6:10). America is a consumer-driven, materialistic nation and it is extremely easy to follow suit. Celebrating Christmas is a primary example, as it is an enjoyable occasion with stockings, Santa hats, candy, cookies, and a multitude of lights decorating the inside and outside of businesses and homes. Department store's special sales entice virtually every person with the intent of motivating them to purchase gifts way beyond the financial budget. One Friday night during the 2012 Christmas season, Wal-Mart was extremely busy. There was a middle-aged woman with a shopping cart full of electronics,

³⁰⁷ Church leader interview summary, 120.

including four Xbox 360 game consoles, two thirty-two inch flat panel television sets, and an abundance of stocking stuffers. The total cost of the woman's merchandise could have easily been over two thousand dollars.³⁰⁸ God is the giver of increase (1 Cor. 3:7). However, it is the individual's responsibility to handle those financial increases properly. Church leaders are responsible to be faithful to God in all areas of life (2 Tim 2.15) and as the old adage goes, "if God has your money he has your heart."

Church leaders must remain faithful to their families.

Families are generally the first casualty of ministry. Church leaders can become workaholics and neglect their families. Ministry means taking time for sermon preparation, counseling, visiting, staff meetings, denominational meetings, church leader conferences, and perhaps seminary or Bible classes. Time dedicated to family can quickly be used for an afternoon nap or an opportunity to write a paper that was due last week. In a short period, other pressing issues appear necessary and eventually replace family time. The eventual result is unending "necessary" service to the church and a family that is last on the church leader's schedule.

Additionally, the congregation's problems cause stress and tension that too often results in church the leader's family becoming a "relief valve." Husband/wives and children suffer because of the poor attitude and anger brought home by the church leader. Children, instead of growing to love church, grow to view the church as the cause of his/her parent's unreasonable and possibly antagonistic behavior.³⁰⁹ Proverbs 22:6 states,

³⁰⁸ This researcher's experience in Sanilac County, November 23, 2012.

³⁰⁹ Church leader interview summary, 135.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”

A child sees the “other side” of a church leader. He/she often does not understand why the church leader displays love, care, and compassion at church but frequently displays opposite characteristics at home (Eph. 6:4). If church leaders are going to train their children to love God, the children must first see the church leader love God at home.

Spouses suffer in addition to the children from the stress of ministry. Church leaders spend a large amount of time loving and caring for needy people and often home is seen as a sanctuary where the church leader can break from this care and concern. However, this cannot be further from the truth (Eph. 25:28). Church leaders must clothe themselves in “tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering...and love” (Col.3:12-14). Paul writes about a transformation of the heart in these verses. It should be the “new nature” (Col. 3:0) of a church leader to show love and to care for all, especially for his/her family. Faithfulness to one’s family must gain preference over ministry. (1 Tim. 3:5).³¹⁰

According to an interviewed church leader, learning how to say “no” is imperative for church leaders.³¹¹ This is very difficult particularly for the new church leader who is attempting to build relationships and earn trust. However, a church that does not value their church leader’s family can be challenging to serve. While involved in the process of understanding the church’s culture and identifying their customs, church leaders can assess how their congregants understand the priority of family in ministry. If preliminary findings reveal that the church membership believes they receive priority

³¹⁰ Daman, *Leading the Small Church*, 94.

³¹¹ Church leader interview summary, 133.

over their church leader's family, the time is appropriate to preach on how God views the family. The leader can evaluate if a move to another church is in order. Church leaders must not put their ministry before their spouse and children, as remaining faithful to family are imperative.

Church leaders must remain faithful to the church.

Although, family comes first on a church leader's priority list, the church leader has the responsibility to be faithful to the church and ensure that church is not neglected. Congregations need their church leaders to be reasonably available. A church leader of a larger Sanilac County³¹² church took advantage of his church's generosity. Although considered full-time staff, the church leader was not available to congregants most weekdays and habitually missed at least one Sunday a month. Alternative staff members, lay workers, or church leaders from neighboring churches performed weddings and funeral services. Unfortunately, the church leader's preaching also revealed neglect in study time and preparation. The congregation was not cared for properly.³¹³

Church leaders have the responsibility to "retreat to the mountains" much as Jesus exemplified (Matt. 14:23). Remaining faithful to the church includes such action as these, while ensuring the family is not neglected. Faithfulness to one's church not only includes routine duties such as preaching, teaching, and praying but also includes spiritual awareness and vision casting. A church leader must be lead by the Spirit of God in

³¹² Church leaders interviewed for this work shop pastored churches number 100 or less on an average weekend service.; Daman, *Leading the Small Church*, 93.

³¹³ The author of this workshop was a staff member at this church as an eyewitness to these events. The names have been withheld as a professional courtesy.

his/her decisions, actions, and speech. Church members expect their leaders to be their “conduit” to God. Many church members do not feel spiritual enough or spiritually “in tune” with God. Therefore, the church leader fills this void. It is sometimes easy to see a correlation between the church leader’s time with God and the congregation’s faithfulness to the church. Maintaining quality prayer and devotion time is imperative, not only for faithfulness to the church, but also for faithfulness to one’s family, and for one’s self.

Faithfulness to the church means having a true spirit of worship. Small churches in Sanilac County believe they present an authentic worship experience, not a manufactured joy or the appearance of “going through the motions.”³¹⁴ In other areas, one does not have to travel far to locate a church that has manufactured worship. These churches have “left their first love” (Rev. 2:4) and exist without faith because their church leaders are without faith (2 Tim.2:14-16). Worship is not based on the style of music or the church leader’s approach to preaching; it is also not about the offering or liturgical traditions. Trueness of worship is based on the heart of those participating (Jn. 4:23-24). Church leaders stand responsible for educating the congregation about biblical worship, and church leaders who fail to teach this doctrine have not remained faithful to true worship of the Lord.

Church leaders must remain faithful to the Word.

Church leaders can gauge success by their faithfulness to the Word of God. A church leader’s life can easily be filled with events and time demands that make

³¹⁴ Church leader interview summary, 119.

opportunity for Bible study time arduous. Church leaders in Sanilac County church often find this to be true.³¹⁵ Some churches have several events planned every month, which requires the church leader's time. Other churches have several people who need constant counseling and care. They also participate in community events, which cause difficulty for their church leaders to manage their time appropriately. Studying the Word suffers in both instances. However, it is imperative for church leaders to maintain a dedicated Bible study time.³¹⁶

The Word of God is food for the soul (Matt. 4:4). Without nourishment, the church leader becomes devoid of spiritual energy. The resulting spiritual doubt for a church leader can bring a time of trial as he/she habitually disregards the wisdom and guidance found within the Word of God. For example, a church leader who neglects his/her Bible study may give poor counsel and make decisions contrary to God's will. A story of a church leader exemplifies this point; the church leader served the church for more than fifteen years. He had seen the church grow from five or six people in a storefront to more than five hundred worshipping in a very large beautiful building. The church seemed to operate on its own. The church leader delegated deacons for visitation and other pastoral duties. He felt that the church was large enough that greeting people before and after the service was unwarranted, as were any personal contacts with the congregation. This church leader became so busy living a "mega-pastor's" life that certain areas of his life began to suffer. He had been preaching for thirty years and began frequently reusing old sermons. At the height of this church leader's ministry, he decided

³¹⁵ Church leader interview summary, 109.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 122.

to run for political office. After his name went on the ballot and he hired a personal security team, then people began leaving the church. The pastor did not have time to study his Bible with the busy political schedule. He did not have time for God either; this was obvious as people left the church due to the pastor's unfaithfulness, until a mere remnant remained.³¹⁷

Spending time in the word is imperative for not only church leaders but for every Christian. Church leaders have the responsibility to teach this principle and to demonstrate it through example. Church members can discern when their leader has neglected the Word of God, just as they can discern a leader who enjoys spending quality time studying God's Word and teaching its truths to the congregation. Church leaders, "I can't impress this on you too strongly. God is looking over your shoulder. Christ himself is the Judge, with the final say on everyone, living and dead. He is about to break into the open with his rule, so proclaim the Message with intensity; keep on your watch. Challenge, warn, and urge your people. Don't ever quit. Just keep it simple" (2 Tim 4:1-2).³¹⁸ One must be faithful to the Word of God, purposefully allowing it guide family life, ministry decisions, visitation, staff meetings, understanding of culture, identification of customs, relationship building, quiet time and prayer time. Church leaders need to use the Word of God as an instruction manual in every respect, as "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

³¹⁷ The author of this workshop was a staff member at the church that recorded these events in Montgomery Alabama, 2009. Out of professional courtesy names have been omitted.

³¹⁸ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), 2 Tim. 4:1-2.

instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Church leaders must remain faithful in prayer.

The Word of God is not the only neglected item for busy church leaders. Most pastors will admit that their prayer life is not consistent and suffers loss due to their many other responsibilities.³¹⁹ Church leaders should pray at the beginning of every day, as activities throughout the day require the guidance of God’s wisdom. Church leaders, no different in this area from their congregation, are too busy to ask, or wait until problems escalate to epic proportions before frantically yelling out to God for assistance. For example, this researcher was attempting to install a garbage disposal for an elderly woman. He readied the disposal and removed the plumbing. All that was left was to remove the basket from the sink (this is the metal piece most people call the drain). Removing the basket can sometimes bend a stainless steel sink if not done properly, and this researcher worked for hours attempting to remove the piece without bending the sink. He was late for some other appointments; he felt frustrated, angry, and out of patience. Needing a larger wrench, this researcher went outside to retrieve it from the truck. After returning to the sink he attempted to loosen the nut with the large wrench; it remained immovable. Six and a-half hours into the project, this researcher was ready to stop trying. As a last resort, he thought for a moment “I am already on my knees; maybe I should ask God for assistance.” After praying, the man grabbed the big nut with his bare hands and

³¹⁹ Church leader interview summary, 108.

turned it off with ease (Matt. 7:7).³²⁰ Furthermore, an interviewed church leader experienced a challenging time of sickness within his family when his newborn caught Whooping Cough. The business of ministry coupled with sickness throughout his family left this church leader feeling tired and helpless. His youngest child had suffered for weeks with a cough that would not subside and the rest of the family had flu-like symptoms. They had made several trips to the doctor in search of relief with no avail. The church leader prayed on occasion for his ministry and family, but admitted his prayers were lacking sincerity and depth. About three weeks of dealing with these extenuating circumstances, the church leader was exhausted and finally sought God's help. The time spent in pray that day proved effective as he felt renewed by the power of God and his child began a quick recovery. A sense of normality returned within a couple of days.³²¹ Prayer is neglected until the situation becomes desperate; however, church leaders lose their mightiest source for assistance and comfort when they neglect prayer.

Church leaders are encouraged to pray constantly by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter six and verse eighteen. Pray for congregational members (Jm. 5:16), pray for strength (Rom. 8:26), pray when troubled (Is 26:16) and pray in the Spirit (Jude 1:20). God will receive and answer your prayers (Matt 21:22, Heb. 10:22, Jm. 1:6). The church leader who knows this truth will continue successfully to habitually pray for their congregations. Faithful prayer gives power to one's preaching and welcomes the Holy Spirit to bless both the church leader and the church. John Killinger writes:

³²⁰ This researcher's personal experience in Sanilac County, 2005.

³²¹ Church leader interview summary, 108.

Several years ago I was preaching in a small Tennessee church. From the minute I entered the sanctuary, I felt a spirit there I hadn't felt in many sanctuaries. The prayers, the music, and even the silences were extraordinary. I feel sure that I preached over my head—that my own spirit was measurably quickened and deepened by the unusual sense of worship prevailing in the minister and the congregation.

Later, I commented about this to two laymen.

"I hope you know," I said, "what a rare and exhilarating kind of worship you enjoy in this church."

They smiled knowingly at one another. "Have you seen The Cloisters?" one asked. I wasn't sure what they were referring to—surely not the assemblage of monastery remains brought to New York by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

"The shed up in the woods behind the preacher's house," one of them added when he saw my perplexity.

I had seen the building, but I didn't know it by the name they used.

"That's what the preacher calls it," they said. "It's where he goes to pray. And sometimes he takes some of us there, too. He goes up there every Saturday evening to pray for our services on Sunday. His wife says sometimes he stays two or three hours."

The mystery of the great worship services suddenly evaporated.

It was not a large congregation. They had no dynamic, colorful song leader. None of the cues were evident that usually indicate an exciting, impressive service of worship. But the most important ingredient of all was present: the minister and his people were prepared spiritually to come before God.³²²

The prayers of a faithful person of God have power and a church leader can compare his/her success to the faithfulness of his/her prayers. If a church leader is oppressed with worry, difficulty, stress, and troubles, he/she should look at their recent amount of prayer time. God is faithful and just and he is willing to restore (1 Jn. 1:9) and bless those who serve him faithfully.

³²² Jack W. Hayford, John Killinger and Howard Stevenson, *Mastering Worship*, Mastering Ministry (Portland, OR; Carol Stream, IL: Multnomah Press; Christianity Today, Inc., 1990), 17-18.

Church leaders must remain faithful to evangelism.

Church leaders can gauge ministry success by their faithfulness to evangelism. Matthew 28:18-20 records Jesus telling his Apostles to make disciples, baptize, and teach doctrine. The Great Commission, titled by biblical scholars, is intended for not only the Apostles but also intended and applicable to Christians today. Church leaders are responsible to teach their congregations how and why it is important to reach their community with the Gospel message.

However, evangelistic efforts have a different appearance in Sanilac County than the examples seen on modern television. Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas for example, offers a coffee house, gift shop, large play areas for children, parking attendants, and fulltime security officers. Church leader Ed Young Jr. uses these evangelistic tools to bring people into the church. Young, his staff, and nearly twenty thousand church members create a unique experience that invites people from around the globe. Visitors are presented with the Gospel message.³²³ The small churches in Sanilac County might have a coffee pot in the kitchen, a small room for children, and on special occasions, might have a guest Gospel-singing group selling compact disks in the foyer. However, small church members in Sanilac County have no desire to emulate Fellowship Church. The small churches in this county faithfully use their own methods of evangelism to reach their community with the Gospel message. For example, some small Sanilac County churches have strawberry socials, others have an annual pig roast, and yet others monthly dinners. Most churches in the county offer an annual Vacation Bible

³²³ Fellowship Church, *Welcome* (Plano: Fellowship Church, Plano, [2013?]), <http://www.fellowshipchurch.com/welcome> (accessed January 23, 2013).

School for children and some offer annual revival services. The design, intention and goal of these programs are evangelistic in nature and the public is welcome and encouraged to attend. Church leaders can evaluate their faithfulness to evangelism when evaluating their success or effectiveness. In biblical terms, do the church leader's works represent wood, hay, or straw or do they represent gold, silver, or precious stones (1 Cor. 3:13)? God will judge a church leader's works affording rewards accordingly (1 Cor. 3:14) but works are not representative of an abundance of people in the pews. "I planted, Apollos watered but God gave the increase" (1Cor. 3:6).

Never look at the empty pews.

The typical small church has empty pews, and small churches in Sanilac County are no exception. Most church leaders have a desire to fill the empty pews because of their understanding of success.³²⁴ The common thought is that a successful church leader has a full church, however this thought is far from true. A successful church leader is faithful to his/her family, church, and to God's will.

As a young church leader, this researcher was serving his first church as senior pastor. The congregation numbered about twenty-five. However, the sanctuary's capacity allowed comfortable seating for approximately eighty people. The seating capacity to person ratio was discouraging, particularly when most of the members sat in the back of the sanctuary. The church leader understood that full chairs meant success. He devised plans to bring visitors into the church. The plans included a coffee shop, daycare facilities, indoor swimming pool, large screen televisions, and a rock band. He could see

³²⁴ Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*, 63.

it all in his mind's eye. It must have been a vision from God. Shortly after sharing his vision with the other church leaders, some members left the church.

The church leader understood that change meant risk and he was willing to lose a few people to advance God's vision for the church. One Sunday morning before the sermon, the church leader announced the proposed changes from the pulpit. The congregation's response was excitingly positive. The church leader began work on the plan. The first event was a "Big Event," and the goal of the plan's design was to double the congregation's size. Setup exhausted an enormous amount of time, even with half of the church assisting. On the day of the event, the entire church was present to greet the visiting "crowd;" they were anxious and ready to "reap the harvest." However, the "crowd" numbered only four people that day, curious members from a neighboring church. Lack of accomplishment to increase the number in the pews soured the congregation's attitudes as they slowly stopped participating in church events. Two volunteers participated in setup for the next "Big Event," and none offered assistance for the following ten "Big Events." After two years of attempting to grow the church, four members remained. Out of money and ideas, Sunday, July 1, 2012 the church doors closed. The church leader did not understand that he was not to look at the empty pews.³²⁵

Leading the small church is about relationships, patience, love, and faithfulness. A new church leader can only accomplish these tasks if he/she understands the church customs and integrates into the culture by adapting his/her lifestyle. Church leaders are called to be faithful not successful. "I [Paul] planted, Apollos watered and God gave the

³²⁵ This researcher's experience as a small church pastor in Michigan, August, 2010 – July, 2012.

increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). Church leaders can strive to understand the culture, identify the customs and adapt appropriately, but they are not responsible for the empty pews.

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
—2 Timothy 2:2

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